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THE SCOPE OF THE NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM CENTER'S RESEARCH PROGRAM IN TEACHING COMPOSITION TO THE BEGINNING WRITER IS DEFINED IN THE EIGHT PAPERS COMPRISING THIS COLLECTION. THE TOPICS FOR THE PAPERS ARE--(1) LIMITING THE AIMS OF TEACHING COMPOSITION IN THE SEVENTH- AND EIGHTH-GRADES TO INCLUDE ONLY NARRATIVE AND DESCRIPTIVE WRITING AND ELEMENTARY PERSUASION, (2) STEPS IN THE BASIC WRITING PROCESS, (3) THE NEED FOR THE WRITER TO ESTABLISH A VOICE OR "PERSONA" FOR A PARTICULAR AUDIENCE, (4) THE CLASSIFICATION OF TYPES OF PROSE IN A NEW WAY--PRACTICAL, JOURNALISTIC, AND ACADEMIC, (5) THE USE OF LITERARY MODELS AND IMAGES TO IMPROVE WRITING, (6) IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED WHEN JUDGING WRITTEN COMPOSITION, (7) TEACHING USAGE IN THE COMPOSITION CLASS, AND (8) A FIVE-POINT SYSTEM BY WHICH WRITING MATURITY IN DESCRIPTIVE ESSAYS CAN BE OBJECTIVELY EVALUATED. SEE ALSO TE 000 124 AND TE 000 126 THROUGH TE 000 129. (JB)

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PAPERS ON COMPOSITION

TE000 127

PAPERS ON COMPOSITION

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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TE000 127

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COMPOSITION IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

The memorandum that follows is intended to initiate discussion. It does not pretend to be definitive, complete, or original. It is admittedly based on too little research and on insufficient thought and reflection, and it was drafted by one who has had absolutely no experience in the schools.

It would of course be possible to be excessively modest about an attempt to say a preliminary word. What follows was preceded by a greater amount of discussion with schools than would have been possible a few years ago. It grows out of an examination of such curricular guides and textbooks as we now have on the shelves of the Curriculum Center, and is the product of considerable discussion within the university and within the profession--such discussion as the present ferment has produced.

A. THE AIMS OF THE CURRICULUM IN ENGLISH

A first strong impression from reading textbooks and guides for the junior high school is one that is continually re-inforced the more one reads--that many too many purposes have been laid on the curriculum in English and the language arts. As a result of this multiplicity of purpose, the discipline itself seems to have become infinitely divisible and now consists of many overlapping but separate parts. Kitzhaber's recent summary of textbooks for the junior and senior high schools, produced by the Oregon Curriculum Center, finds some 36 separate parts of

English. Besides being many and miscellaneous, the aims of English strike one as often confused in thought and badly in need of rigorous definition.

The task of defining our discipline may be extraordinarily difficult, but little progress toward sequence is possible without such definition. Only a clear definition can keep us from constantly beginning again and again, even in college, when virtually every freshman English text feels the need of introducing all the elements of rhetoric, as though there had been no previous instruction.

The first requisite step is to allow English composition to be the autonomous discipline it most surely is. It is fully able to justify itself as an art valuable in and of itself. It has received strong support because it is essential to other disciplines and because it is inconceivable that education could proceed very far without some skill in composition. But it does not need even that support, since it is fully respectable as an academic discipline that serves its own ends.

Composition does not need to seek respectability by carrying the large political, moral, and social aims that society has imposed on the schools. These broad aims are of course not irrelevant to American education or to any one of its subjects. But English composition will not improve until we remove from the backs of the composition teachers an intrusive and ever-present concern with the requirements of society. The Los Angeles curriculum guide says that the aim of English composition is "effective living in our American society." Wherever that large and honorific purpose prevails, composition as a skill based on a command of rhetorical principles is lost sight of. Worthy but ambitious and ill-defined social objectives may obscure the fact that composition is a discipline whose component parts and their proper sequence should be made the subject of rigorous scrutiny. Stephen Leacock once said, "I claim that anybody can learn to write just as anybody can learn to swim." That definition may be excessively simple, but unless we feel the force of its modest but inescapable logic we will attempt too much and accomplish too little.

1. The Resource Unit.

Instruction in the language arts during the seventh and eighth grades now often proceeds by what Arno Jewett in Chapter V of _The English Language Arts in American High Schools_ calls the "resource unit." Even in 1938 Dora V. Smith found that the method of proceeding by units was widely followed, and Jewett has said that in the twenty-one states that have published courses of study 57% of the state curriculum guides include one or more examples of the resource unit.

What is the resource unit? A precise answer is difficult to give, if one considers what can be included. Jewett says that these units "are related to a significant educational purpose, a basic need or human problem, a theme, a famous author and his works, a communication job, or a literary type . . ." So broad and permissive a conception of the basic units of the discipline has led to great diversity in the blocks of material presented. A span of time in English can be devoted to a kind of writing--the editorial or the familiar letter; but an immediately subsequent unit, apparently co-ordinate in position, can be devoted to "Life on the Frontier." A popular unit in Los Angeles is concerned with far-away places. One in Charlotte, Virginia, is entitled "Enjoying the Short Story," and another is called "Some People Worth Knowing."

Many of these units undoubtedly stimulate good writing. But taken in the aggregate they cannot be said to reveal a precisely defined rationale for improving skill in writing the English language or in composing ideas. In fact, English as a skill seems not to be an important criterion. Jewett says the criteria used to select units are "usually these":

> 1. The nature and needs of society as reflected in the aims of education.
> 2. The needs, problems, interests, and growth patterns of youth as determined by expert opinion and research.

2. Listening.

In 1932 Dora V. Smith did not include listening as one of the subjects of instruction in English. But Arno Jewett's recent survey of the language arts in American schools (whose purpose is to show the changes in instruction since Smith's survey) says that now 70% of the state curriculum guides and 76% of the local guides recommend that listening be taught. Listening is one of the four co-ordinate parts of English, according to the definition of the National Council of Teachers of English.

As an educational aim listening is so loosely defined that its presence in the English curriculum enforces the impression of confusion and the belief that definition is one of our inescapable needs. One can agree that a grade-school class needs training in how to pay polite attention, that note-taking is important, that the oral reading of poetry and the performance of the drama improve literary study. But what does listening mean as a separate category? What in the art of rhetoric justifies shifting the burden of communicating an idea to the receiver from the sender? And what can be said--except of course that clear thinking is necessary--about a basic curricular subject that covers so many diverse practices? The guide for Charleston, West Virginia, tells us under listening that we should learn how to cup the hand in order to amplify the voice. Sometimes listening covers the detection of propaganda in the local newspaper, and sometimes it is indistinguishable from speech itself.

3. Separating Instruction in Grammar From Instruction in Writing.

If the guide for Winnetka is typical--and Kitzhaber's survey of textbooks and guides suggests that it is--writing and grammar are almost always conceived of together and taught together. This marriage, one suspects, is one of convenience. Written composition is allowed to justify itself as the best hunting-ground for grammatical errors and impolite usages. This union has persisted in the face of statements by educational researchers that the two fields have very little to do with one another and in the face of a strong desire of many linguists to give their discipline independent status as one of the humanities.

It is the untutored hunch of many that there must be a close relation between the study of language as language and the ability to write. At least it seems logical that a discipline concerned with sentences and words must have something to say to the art of writing. Illiterate writing is unpersuasive and falters as communication. Freedom of choice in using words, phrases, sentences--all manner of grammatical virtuosity, in fact--would certainly be served by a principled study of language and by a mastery of its nomenclature.

Nevertheless, the rigorous separation of the two disciplines of grammar and composition--at least for a well-defined period in the curriculum--might restore the autonomy and dignity that each deserves. For one thing, the teaching of composition needs to be conceived of as much broader than the teaching of literacy, important though literacy is. The teaching of writing should not forever be burdened with the task of policing the student's usage. The pen goes to paper with greater reluctance even than is usual if every writing assignment is also a lesson in grammar. The teaching of grammar, too, ought to improve if it is separated from the original theme. Drills in literacy, performed regularly, rigorously, and autonomously, might achieve accuracy and ease in the polite forms.

4. Literature and Writing.

The curriculum guide for New York City says that composition ought to encourage the student to "appreciate effective writing by others." Should it? Or is this another extraneous aim laid on an already complex task? Literary criticism, literary appreciation, a knowledge of literary history, sophistication in literary kinds are important, but they do not in any direct way serve the aims of composition.

It has been immemoriably believed that reading is vitally connected to writing, and these common-sense assumptions seem so firmly supported by logic that they should be taken for granted unless indisputable evidence to the contrary is brought forward. Models are important, and proper professional ones should be discovered for the seventh and eighth grades. Student models are also important and we should make every effort to make available to the student the writing of his peers. Literature of any genre suggests topics, improves powers of sensory observation, throws a student back on his own experience, illustrates style, and increases vocabulary. But to read poetry for the improving of one's own style and one's own powers of observation as a writer is one thing. To read poetry as a critic or historian of poetry is something quite different, and should be clearly separated from the task of composition. If composition is made subservient to literary study, it will never become the rhetorical art that it was traditionally conceived to be and that it most surely is. The union with literature, like the union with sociology, history, and grammar, has had no other result than to weaken composition as an autonomous art.

5. Limiting the Aims of Composition.

It is a safe guess that in the classroom composition is not treated as perfunctorily as it is in the curriculum guides. In the Winnetka guide, for example, 99 pages are devoted to speaking and listening, 97 to grammar, and only 38 to writing. But even though much less attention is paid to composition than to other branches of English, the aims for writing are still numerous and often contradictory. The Davenport guide lists fourteen separate kinds of writing; the Winnetka guide recommends 38 different kinds to students in the first eight grades.

Limitation of aim is as important for composition itself as for the field as a whole. It is manifestly impossible in the seventh and eighth grades to teach what many schools expect to be taught--formal exposition, the research paper, the logical paragraph, outlining, note-taking, newspaper-writing, business-letters, the book report, and many other kinds.

It is now premature to say dogmatically what should be postponed until high school and what should be taught in the earlier grades. But it does seem strikingly inappropriate that formal exposition and the research paper should be so firmly entrenched in the junior high school. Surely this is a kind of writing that is done best in college or even in graduate school. But the guide now followed in the Evanston junior high schools, based on recommendations from the Evanston Township High School, states as the first aim of writing in the junior high school the mastery of expository prose. Expository prose seems often to mean formal exposition or the long research paper--writing analogous to the kind that the

Social Science-English teacher did in his own graduate days. Actually, how appropriate is the long paper--and all that goes with it--to the preadolescent child? Is there nothing more interesting and imaginatively stimulating for him to write than logical outlines or the expository paragraph? Does the preparation for writing consist only of note-taking, library work, and amateur research? Are the students who are asked to write research papers ready to do much more than crib from encyclopedia articles or at least paraphrase them in a way that is very close to plagiarism? What benefits arise from raiding the libraries of friends, from writing to the Pakistani embassy, from having interviews with experts, from collecting samples that are discussed in the paper--if the imagination is allowed to languish and if more appropriate writing tasks are forgotten.

If we are genuinely interested in improving writing, we must challenge every kind of writing now recommended in the seventh and eighth grades. Why should the book report be necessary? Is a business letter all that important for students in these years? Should--in fact, can--the paragraph be taught in isolation? Don't paragraphs vary from one kind of discourse to another? Have we given enough opportunity for creative writing? Is training in the use of the telephone a legitimate and important aim? Do students need formal instruction in the writing of minutes?

It is of course not necessarily wrong to teach any one of these things in the junior high school. But it is patently impossible to teach all of them. Composition, a most difficult art that is in many ways unnatural to man, must proceed slowly and by precise and logical gradations. Some compositional virtues are surely more appropriate at this level than others. One is tempted to suggest that imaginative and sensory elan, humor, the honest reporting of known and experienced reality are more appropriate than accuracy in research, economy and precision of language, exactness of vocabulary, and austerity of logic. Without being dogmatic, one can ask that such questions as these be everywhere asked: Should emphasis be placed on expansiveness, on motivations for writing, on training in observation, on the use of the imagination? Should the requisite but restrictive and difficult virtues be postponed until later on when the student has something to restrict?

> You praise the firm restraint with which they write--
>   I'm with you there, of course.
> They use the snaffle and the curb all right;
>   But where's the bloody horse?
>
> (Roy Campbell, "On Some South African Novelists")

B. INFORMAL WRITING IN THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES

In the months that the Curriculum Center has been in existence the conviction has grown that a series of lessons in informal writing should be prepared for the seventh and eighth grades. But what is informal writing? Can it be defined? Can it be taught? How does it differ from creative writing, that is, the writing of stories, plays, and poems? How does it differ from exposition, from the expository paragraph that is so widely recommended at the present time?

One way to define informal writing is in terms of the forms of discourse. Informal writing can be said to consist of narration, description, and elementary persuasion, but not of exposition. One can of course teach the forms of discourse without confining oneself to any single form alone, or without teaching them for their own sake. There is admittedly something unnatural about writing description only, or at least in continuing too long with this single form. Most forms of writing--even the dissertation!--include description, and certainly persuasion and narration fall flat without it. But since each one of the forms of discourse has qualities appropriate to it, training must be provided in each type. There is one kind of order appropriate to narration, another kind appropriate to description. The expository order so frequently taught is appropriate to neither. There is an art--or, more exactly, there are arts--of narration. There are other arts peculiar to description--a spatial sequence, for example, differs from the temporal order appropriate to narration. And for descriptive writing training in observation and in the improvement of our sensory powers is absolutely requisite. Students must be taught to observe. Accurately, yes. But also fully, with a kind of joyous fullness that is surely natural to the child who is still responding freshly to the environment that surrounds him.

If we agree that description, narration, and persuasion should be taught in the junior high school, we must, logically, teach the skills appropriate and peculiar to each. But the forms of discourse need not be kept separate, at least for very long. Anecdotes appear in persuasive speeches; descriptions enter narrations. And the values of each form of discourse can be derived from a wide range of readings. Perhaps, therefore, it would be wise to select an order--description first, followed by narration, followed by elementary persuasion--and then to work consciously on how to carry over from one form to another the skills already mastered. Description trains us in sensory observation and in verbal vividness; but these qualities are also appropriate to narration. And a good persuasive style bristles with vivid particulars and metaphors based upon them. Difficult though it may be, we should attempt to rise to the challenge of relating the forms of discourse to one another and to allowing the virtues of each to fructify all our writing.

Another way to define informal writing is to consider those kinds or genres that best embody the qualities we are seeking. Or, not to let the point of the previous paragraph die, we should ask what kinds of writing best embody the forms of discourse, description, narration, elementary persuasion, that we are teaching? Long research papers obviously do not. Telephone conversations do not. The making of announcements and the writing of minutes do not, except in indirect ways. But personal letters, biographies, autobiographies, informal essays, character sketches, and editorials do.

All writing requires (1) the selection of materials, (2) an order or a shaping form, and (3) appropriate expression. The writing process must be studied even in informal composition. No assignment can ignore any of these three parts. Each of them must be seen in context. Order or form, for example, should not be taught in isolation, as it sometimes is, but in close relation to the aims of a particular assignment. There is no order valuable *per se*, just as there is no style appropriate to all kinds of writing.

Training in writing must be unremittingly concerned with order or form and with expression or style. But a special word needs now to be said about the finding of the topic, the old rhetorical principle of *inventio*. Of all the guides studied so far, only the one produced for New York City is fertile in suggestions for topics. So important is this matter that if we fail here, we fail completely, and writing becomes a stultifying exercise. For this reason oral discussion and even a set speech preceding a written assignment become important. Vigorous thought must be given to the problem of how to help the teacher help the student to find an appropriate topic. The writing process must be prepared for; it does not come naturally. And the finding of the subject--and that of course includes the proper limiting of the subject--is the most important step in that process. The visual arts, music, Saturday Evening Post covers, proverbs, newspaper headlines, cartoons, speeches on tape, and readings should be used to suggest topics; and these topics should then be refined to specific, limited, and manageable assignments over a sufficient period of time to allow class discussion and oral participation. The student will be motivated to write, only if the assignment is not conceived of as a written exercise for the eye of the teacher alone. It should be something that arises from his daily life and experience, something that he shares with his peers.

All of this has surely been said before. But what may not have been done before is the preparation of specific and detailed assignments arranged in a sequence appropriate to the abilities and interests of the child and embodying the virtues of informal writing. What has not been done is to describe a series of steps that will (1) help the student find a topic on which he wants to write, (2) train him specifically in the order or form appropriate to that subject and its realization, and (3) increase his virtuosity, not in Style but in the style appropriate to his immediate concerns.

We have so far discussed informal writing in connection with (1) the forms of discourse, (2) the kinds of writing, (3) the writing process itself. There is still another way of considering the matter, in connection with the writer and his audience. For in informal writing we encourage the writer to exploit his own personality--his likes, dislikes, idiosyncracies; his character and his environment and the relation and the interaction of the two. We encourage him to become aware of himself and his world in writing experiences that exposition and the long paper cannot possibly provide.

We also encourage him to know his audience; and it is here that speech, now regarded as one of the four co-ordinate parts of English, becomes indispensable. There is scarcely a curriculum guide that does not pay lip-service to the importance of speech. But are speech and writing integrally related in practice? Is speech used to serve the aim of persuasion? Does speech help the writer acquire a sense of his own personality and a working knowledge of his audience? Is writing a lonely and mysterious task performed in solitude for a solitary and remote reader?

Speech is important not only in establishing contact between the writer and his audience and in giving the writer a sense of his own personality but also in the finding of the assignment and in animating the written style with the virtues of oral English.

Assignments in writing require appropriate readings, and one of the most important tasks is to put examples of good informal writing that embody the written qualities we have already discussed in the hands of teachers and students. The task is not easy. What looks good at first becomes inappropriate on closer examination. One simply does not know in advance how successful a piece of writing is going to be. But some chances have to be taken, and one cannot expect the perfectly illustrative piece or the absolutely appropriate embodiment of what one is teaching. Portions of an essay have to be used to illustrate the matter at hand when we cannot press the entire piece into service. Such works as the following, even though they may not be useful in all respects, should be considered: Edgar Lee Masters' description of his father, Mary Ellen Chase's description of the Lord's day in the '90s, James Agee's description of mowing the lawn, Morrison's recollections of his Boston boyhood. The examples chosen need not be--in fact ought not be--on the level of the student's own writing. But they must of course be within the student's intellectual reach. Whenever readings can be related to one another, more can be said about them than if they stand in isolation. Washington Irving's, Latrobe's, and Ellsworth's separate description of the society of prairie dogs on the American frontier are not only interesting themselves but, read together, show how style and even observation vary with the writers' differing purposes.

If the recommendations made in this document are laid alongside Sauer's statement of objectives appropriate to the seventh and eighth grades, it will be apparent that what is here suggested is in no way radical. (This paper may indeed have only one virtue, that it simplifies aim and emphasis.) For the seventh grade Sauer calls for the realization of five separate aims, each of which we ought to view in the light of the preceding discussion. (1) The sense of order he requires is, if we have been right, much too generally stated. Proper order cannot be taught in isolation but only in relation to a specific kind of discourse or to specific assignments. (2) The interrelation of all the language arts, a worthy aim in itself, also needs to be restricted. And simple interrelationship is not sufficient: emphasis must be given to what is important. If listening, for example, were related to writing and reading by being clearly subordinated to them, it might be a much more logical category than it now is standing alone. And, as we have seen, speech and

English would be better educational citizens living together than living alone. (3) Accuracy seems to be a worthy enough aim for all kinds of writing, but it too needs to be seen in context and should not be allowed to stand alone. Accuracy in explanation is one thing, integrity and precision of observation quite another. The aims concerning (4) the evolution and development of language and (5) the varieties of English are unquestionably worthy, but should be studied in connection with language and grammar and not be allowed to intrude on composition at this level.

For the eighth grade Sauer calls for the realization of four aims. (1) We too have stressed the importance of observation, but not for its own sake. It should serve the ends of description and narration--and the making of metaphor and simile. (2) The need to interpret experience is an appropriate objective which perhaps ought to be made central; it is peculiarly relevant to the kinds of writing recommended in this paper--the essay, the biography, the editorial, and the autobiography. (3) The importance of transition is on an entirely different level. As a stylistic quality, it is meaningless when it stands alone, since transition in a narrative is vastly different from transition in expository writing. (4) The importance of emphasis is too general a criterion to be helpful. Like many of the other aims that Sauer outlines, it takes on meaning only in the context of a particular compositional task that needs to be performed.

This document has attempted to do no more than present a highly general plan for (1) defining and refining the aims of English composition and (2) preparing lessons in informal writing for the seventh and eighth grades. It will be nothing without the implementation that will come when teachers attempt to write specific assignments. But those assignments will be less effective than they ought to be if they are not conceived of in the framework of a general purpose. This paper is an attempt to outline such a purpose.

Its views are tentative. It does not state an adopted or even agreed upon policy. It is in fact no more than an attempt to create the discussion that will eventually lead to policy. Everyone who reads it is invited to disagree.

Jean H. Hagstrum

INTRODUCTION

to

LESSONS IN THE BASIC PROCESSES OF COMPOSITION

Developed by

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INTRODUCTION

When a child sits down to write a paper or a theme he starts a truly astonishing set of motor and intellectual activities: the accurate drawing of letters or fingering of the keys on a lettering machine; the correct use of the different sets of graphic signs that stand for the sound of words and that indicate relationships among words and ideas in the written forms of the language; the exercise of the powers of observation and analysis, of phantasy and imagination; the purposeful synthesis of all these and more in the production of a document for more or less public issue.

Sometimes it has seemed that--no doubt for reasons of convenience--teachers of composition have concentrated their attention on the mechanical skills of penmanship, spelling, and grammar. They must have supposed that natural growth or the beneficent influence of "motivation" would take care of the development of all those skills of "seeing"* and reporting which are, in fact, the truly productive causes of successful compositions.

Latterly, perhaps, attitudes have been somewhat liberalized, and teachers have been seeking more general qualities of excellence in the papers of their students. In a rather general sort of way they have agreed on the following desirable qualities. A paper should have form of some sort; or at least it should be classifiable (however artificially) as one or another of the four forms of composition or discourse. It should have a center of some sort and perhaps some sort of development; or at least it should approach the condition of having unity, coherence, and emphasis And insofar as it succeeds, it should have a quality called tone or style meaning that it will have a certain individual sound to it Finally, since a paper is a public document, it should be accurate as to punctuation, spelling, and word-choice to say nothing of paragraphing.

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*Note the many meanings of see in any unabridged dictionary.

It is not clear, however, where--or how--young people learn the techniques that will result in papers with these qualities. It seems very odd indeed to suppose that a child will learn how to compose a paper by trial and error, when learning in no other subject of the curriculum is left to proceed in such fashion. Yet that is, precisely, what English teachers do. We assign a subject (My Summer Vacation) or a type (description, narration), mention a certain number of words, and then wait for papers to come in to be corrected. And when we are correcting the papers, we regularly point out what is absent or missing from the papers, what quality this one has failed to achieve, what virtue is lacking in this one, what grace in that one We do not ever say what the student should have done, as he wrote or before, to avoid these failures in his product. We expect that the student will avoid future failures if we mark the results of past ones.

In this system the paper becomes little more than a means for the student to commit errors or demonstrate weakness. It is not a thing that he makes because he knows how to Rather he is asked to write a paper just because he doesn t know how to, and just so as to give his teacher something to teach with. What would the teacher do if there were no students who committed errors, none whose work showed definite differences from the forms and styles of writing found in the literature anthologies that the teacher used in college? Or to take an even more desperate situation, what does the teacher do with the student--and there are such--who doesn't make errors, whose papers show all the static virtues of the good paper as described above, but at the same time lack something that is loosely called "life" or "interest"?

II

In Themes, Theories, and Therapy Kitzhaber has suggested that writing may, indeed, be so complex a process, and so tied to the unconscious, that it cannot in fact be taught. In this view, system and sequence are not for writing teachers, "for a student needs all things at once whenever he composes anything as long as a paragraph." Perhaps so when the student "composes anything as long as a paragraph." But doesn't that very clause beg the question? For what we really want to know is whether a student learns to write by composing things as long as paragraphs. And we also need to know what it is that some students have done, or have had done to them, which makes them able to compose things as long as paragraphs that are better than (or at least not so bad as) those of other students who are also trying to compose things as long as paragraphs.

These are difficult questions, indeed, but surely not quite without answer. Perhaps some answers can at least be guessed from inspection of such "papers" as the following, written by a student in a high-ability tenth grade section.

i

My bed distinguishes my room from any other room in my home or in any other house. Many people have single beds such as I have. Several people even have canopies over their beds, but I have a semi-canopy with long flowing white curtains which surround the head of the bed. The curtains are ruffled and at certain times of the year, artifical [sic] flowers are hung on the ruffles.

My animal friends, a thirty-seven year old teddy, a black musical lamb with pink ears, and a light-gray elephant with red feet and a curled nose, peer out from behind the curtains. They sit and play on a white eyelet bedstread. The lamb likes the flowered eyelet with the pink blanket showing through the holes. He also likes the maple with a fruitwood finish of which my bed is made.

My bed is the center of activity in my bedroom. On it, I may do my homework or watch television with my animal friends.

ii

Summer school is a good idea, because it provides extra learning opportunities as well as extra help. ------ High School has a plan whereby a student may take summer courses for the enjoyment of gaining knowledge or in order to make up credits for graduation. This plan seems best, because some students need extra help, while others yearn for advancement. Summer school gives one a chance to broaden his learning experiences before he enters the business-world.

Some drawbacks are presented by summer school, however. One could

> be working to save money for college, while broadening his experiences with the business world. A job would help earn money for the future. It would also help give one an idea of life after schooling, thereby preparing one for life. It could help one decide on ones [sic] future occupation.
>
> Both going to summer school and getting a job would help one.

Ignoring for the moment the attitudes and values expressed in the papers, and thinking only of the qualities of the language, what one notices at once is its excessive correctness: for example, the careful shift of the terminal preposition in "of which my bed is made," the equally careful comma after the artificially placed "On it" in the last sentence of the first paper, the two all too precise "one . . . his" constructions, and the rather heavy "both . . . and" correlative.

A second disturbing quality in the writing is its prevailing formality and fussiness. A bed is said to "distinguish" a room. The writer has a "home"; other people only have "houses." Some kind of parallelism is sought in "Many people . . . . . several people," evidently without any thought for meaning. Toys move and have their little feeling. Students in a suburban high school have "learning opportunities" and "learning experiences," and knowledge is said to be gained, experience to be broadened. Young people enter the business-world, earn money for the future; they get ideas about life after schooling and thus are prepared for life. It is all very genteel, very schoolroomish; and quite, quite dispiriting.

Nevertheless the writer of those papers has pretty clear ties to modern written and literary culture. Not so the writer of the following papers.

i

As I open one of the sliding doors to my room, the first unforgettable sight I see is the brown stained cherry-wood on the walls. Across from the entrance there is three sun windows on the other wall is two more. My dresser and desk lay along the east wall. There is also a cozy little rug (circular) shape) that covers the entire middle portion of the room. The room looks so clean homy I just like to sit in there and think of the days doings.

ii

I think that summer school shouldent be forced to take if a person flunks a subject. I think when he or She gets in hi-school, they should realize the importance of a high school education and not to fool around and flunk. Because summer school is just another discouragement after another (flunking). If he or she still insists on flunking courses they should have their hi school education lengthened an extra year or so whichever it takes to complete it.

For this boy, writing--the written dialect--means little more than a transcription of his speech. In his first piece, for example, the run-on sentence, so-called, and the absence of punctuation or connectives to hold "homy" to the rest of its sentence surely come as the result of his failure to find graphic equivalents for the pauses, hesitations, and rhythms of the spoken dialect, or of his too literal copying of the apparently paratactic structure of running speech. In the second piece, too, the likeliest explanation of the erratically constructed first and second sentences is the writer's unfamiliarity with the organizing patterns of the written language; his inability to think ahead, as composition teachers say, when they have to deal with a child who is mainly used to the discontinuities of ordinary conversation, where the speakers make constant, easy adjustments of the patterns of their discourse, in a kind of flowing response to the totality of the experience. Probably the curious use of parentheses in both pieces is the boy's attempt to find a graphic sign for the grammatical connections that he would signalize in speech by a gesture, an inflection, or a mutter:--

--cozy little rug uh circular uh shaped

--cozy little rug uh circular uh I mean shaped y'know

Or the parentheses may stand for the pauses between question and answer:--

Whadya mean--discouragement?

Flunking.

III

Obviously these two children are at or near the extremes of the ability to deal with the comparatively rigid patterns of written English. For the girl, secure in the culture of the school, at ease with the graphic patterns of words-in-writing, the papers must have been easy and satisfying to write. Probably she thought she was "putting across" her subject, as, no doubt, she had been taught to. That "light-gray elephant with red feet and a curled nose," the product of years of faithful teaching and quick learning, must have mightily pleased both her and her teacher, and so too the calculated variations in the sentence patterns. And indeed the world itself, the rich, intractable world of fact and feeling, is not entirely concealed and cut off by all the words, the complacent and vulgar value-system that the girl has shrouded herself with. The two little mis-spellings throw their own kind of light into the naughty schoolroom. And the lamb who likes "the flowered eyelet with the blanket showing through the holes" is a not uninteresting means (or symbol) for expressing and releasing some feelings that are quite the girl's own. So, taking it all in all, the girl probably does deserve to be ranked in a high-ability section. Yet the fact is that the only worthwhile matter in her papers is that little section on the toys in the first one, where for a moment she frees herself from the well-learned rules. The second paper is a collection of platitudes, of which the best that can be said is that it probably represents a reasonably competent assessment of an audience; the worst, that it does represent the child's own value system. In general the papers suggest a deplorable lack of contact with the real world, a dangerous refusal to look beyond words to facts. It is perhaps to be noted also that even in the passage on the toys the total effect is somewhat regressive and rigid.

For the boy, it is clear, words-in-writing come hard; probably he got little satisfaction from the paper, his teacher still less. Was he pleased by--did he even notice--the fine last sentence of the paper on his room: "The room looks so clean homy I just like to sit in there and think of the days doings"? Would his teacher have thought to compliment him on its rhythm, its fine cadence (with alliteration!), its easy, clear expression of feeling? And would she have stopped to notice the thought and feeling in the sentence fragment in the second paper: "Because summer school is just another discouragement after another (flunking)"? Would she--in the face of the misspellings, the odd punctuation, the trouble with verb form and number? Would she--in the face of the boy's probable reputation, the ineluctable fact of his ranking in a low-ability group?

For that matter, would his teacher have noticed the considerable freedom of expression in the boy's first paper? He begins, of course, with a perfunctory but organized catalogue that is straight out of directions in some book. ("A description of a room may be begun by imagining yourself opening the door for a visitor. What is the first thing you want him to see? The next? Perhaps you can organize your description by following around the walls.") He sustains virtue for only a moment, however, and then, forgetting his teacher (though perhaps not his audience), he gets onto items of value and begins to write something of general interest. The paper is a kind of triumph over the rule book.

The boy's second paper is not nearly so fluent. Presumably it shows the difficulty that children this age (tenth grade) run into when they are required to set out even the simplest kind of general and impersonal argument. Note that the second paper of the "high-ability" girl shows, relatively, the same kind and degree of trouble as the boy's.

For the boy, so unhappily uneasy with any writing, this particular assignment must have presented additional, special difficulties. The assignment was "to write a thoughtful opinion, perhaps a paragraph or two, about summer school . . . ." This in itself would have meant trouble enough, because it contains the difficult abstract concepts of "writing" a "thoughtful opinion" and of making a piece of writing called "a-paragraph-or-two." And more trouble would have come upon the student because the general direction was limited by tying the "opinion" down to "whether you think it's necessary, a good idea or bad; whether you think more students should go to summer schools; whether you feel that swimming and summer jobs and vacations are so important that there should be no summer schools at all." Besides being full of abstractions like "good idea or bad," "more students," and "so important," this direction gets right into the fairly difficult question of postponed value--itself not one likely to have played a large part in the boy's life, or at least so one would suppose from his papers.

It is, then, no wonder that the boy turned out this struggling jumble of sentences, straggling back and forth from one level of generalization to another, without direction or confidence, though with an apparent topic sentence. Yet somehow or other, the boy did manage to get out a simple, practical, workaday comment and solution, showing himself to be a good deal more in touch with things than the girl.

In sum, taking "writing" in the broadest and most creative sense, it is not at all clear which of these students is superior. Indeed, the boy may come off slightly the better. But that, it will be said, is a more or less romantic judgment based on an analysis that is quite remote from what *must* go on in the classroom, because of what society or parents or employers or somebody wants. There, in the classroom, it is said, the only problem is how to bring writing like the boy's up to the cleanness of the girl's. And of course spelling, punctuation, grammar, and paragraphing are important, and it would be very nice indeed if the boy--and all those like him--could turn out papers that would be mechanically inoffensive. But would it not also be nice if the girl--and all others like her--could say as much as the boy? Is it not also a great problem to bring the girl's writing up to the expressiveness of the boy's? Perhaps the true problem of the classroom is a double one: how to clean up the boy's writing, how to emancipate the girl's thoughts and feelings from the constraint of schoolroom conventions. But the girl's tight, inhibited, rather impersonal style points the same way as the boy's mechanical errors. They are both, as it were, indexes of discomfort. And so the double problem is, perhaps, a single one after all: how can the composition class, the teaching of writing, and indeed writing itself be made to seem natural and pleasurable, the occasion and means of a satisfying (even a self-consummatory) experience instead of, as they too often still are, a chance for teaching (though not necessarily for learning) that mysterious entity known as "good English?"

IV.

One answer would be for teachers to abandon the notion that their business is revealing "good English" to their students, or enforcing it on them, and to cease their "unremitting nagging" at bad or "ineffective" or "inappropriate" English. Then they could begin the very difficult job of thinking of themselves as only trying to help children develop a true and enriching mastery of their native language. As Martin Joos says, the teacher's "aim should be to make the child's own [linguistic] resources available to him." That means, apparently, that the teacher must, so far as conscience, schoolroom, and parents will allow, let the child alone to do his own experimenting with his own grammatical and stylistic patterns and transformations--both those he knows and those he comes upon by accident or by more or less conscious searching. The teacher's chief--perhaps his only--workable device must be the very simple one of setting up an atmosphere in the classroom, and an attitude toward language and writing, which will encourage students to try to include, in their writing, some of the lively, accurate words, the complex grammatical structures, and the relatively sophisticated sentence patterns that they use more or less regularly and easily in their talking. The teacher can also demonstrate possibilities, sometimes by suggesting alternative phrasings for the student's own work, sometimes--and probably better--by pointing out usable choices in the work of professional writers. What a teacher must not do is condemn a student if he follows the grammar of his own dialect or (as is often the case) what he imagines to be the grammar of his teacher's dialect and uses a construction that is not covered by the rules of standard English (or at least of the schoolroom patois).

"Correct what you absolutely must," Joos says, "to salve your conscience, but don't call attention to what you are doing; instead, try to give the impression that you have heedlessly written your own forms without noticing what the pupil wrote; for instance, you must not circle or cross out what he wrote--you owe at least this much to common decency." After all, "the fact is that /the child/ is always obeying a vast number of grammatical rules, a very small fraction of which happen to be different grammar rules from the ones that the critic subscribes to." Children, even lower-class children, "have just as much grammar as anybody, very little of it non-standard."

As far as the teaching of standard English is concerned, it is imperative, as Joos says, for teachers and children to "come to terms with each other--and of course all the burden of coming to terms must rest upon the one who is supposed to be wiser and better informed--on the basis that usages can be learned without condemning those which they replace, that the learner has an indefeasible right to speak as he likes without school penalties, while the teacher has no right in this respect but only the duty to demonstrate what usages are profitable in the adult world." Such a reform in attitude would bring about enormous humanizing changes in teaching procedure. Teachers and students alike would be saved from the rare, the rather awful burden of having to adopt during the schoolday (or at least in the English class) the "special schoolroom voice-qualities, melodies, and of course words and grammar patterns" that now signal the general unreality of the English teaching business. And this would certainly freshen the atmosphere of English classes, and perhaps even make it easier for children to want to use the middle-class-tied forms of American English.

V

How and whether these reforms would affect the teaching of composition is perhaps not quite so clear. For as Hughes Mearns remarked a long time ago, teachers "are likely to demand finished products at the first draft, or they may divert all the energies of the [pupil] toward those excellent matters, script, spelling, punctuations, margins, clean paper and the like." Indeed today we are told

> A college English department should adopt a clear-cut and severe rule with respect to misspelling in student compositions. When students write outside of class where they have all the time they need to consult a dictionary and to proofread their papers, there is no excuse for misspelling. When they write impromptu papers and have less time for proofreading, the rule might be tempered a little at first. But before the term is far advanced, they should be expected to budget their time on impromptus so that they are able to proofread and to look up the words they are unsure of; then they should be held to the same standard on these papers as on those written outside of class. The sooner a student is persuaded of the enormous social importance of conventional spelling, the sooner he will take pains to eliminate misspellings from his work--

and the sooner, perhaps, he will gain a secure mastery over the spelling of the words he most often uses. The departmental rule should therefore be stringent, perhaps a failing grade for a three-page paper containing three or more separate misspellings. The rule might begin to apply with the third paper of the term, after students have been clearly and repeatedly warned.

It would not be a bad idea, in fact, to formulate a "blacklist" of gross errors in the mechanics of writing and to give the list to students at the beginning of the term, warning them that after a certain point in the term errors of these kinds will be severely penalized in their papers.

The writer of those strictures is, in some sense, aware of scholarly attitudes toward the facts of language. At least he suggests "that no error could be considered a gross error if the opinion of competent language scholars is divided about it." But the awareness must be somewhat obscure: note the use of error and the curious notion that split usages are defined by the "opinion of competent language scholars." Opinion about what? The "correctness" of the usage? Mencken, thou shouldst be living at this hour.

So it is perhaps no wonder that the writer seems to conceive of the English teacher's job as one of instilling "habits of correctness and coherence and precision of statement." The task of the student, then, is to compose paragraphs or "meticulously finished" short papers that are nicely spelled and punctuated and have few or no "gross errors" in grammar.

In the circumstances, with the composition class remaining, in spite of the brave bows to realism, only a kind of forcing house for the bleak orchids of correctness, children would surely have precious little time for experimenting with their linguistic resources, and far, far less for learning anything about the art of writing.

Willa Cather once asked a group of English teachers "why the formal side of literature was stressed in the school at the expense of the sole reason for its value, namely, its effect upon the mind and spirit of man. The answer was, first, the recognition of the formal side of literature--its shape, arrangement, and organization--is the easier to teach; and, second, we teachers do not seem to know anything else." With very few changes--and those quite obvious--the anecdote could be turned from the literature to the composition class. For it is clear that there is little that goes on in the composition class that has to do with the art of writing. And this is so because writing--the art thereof--is just what most teachers of composition don't know about, don't have any feeling for. Since they do not themselves write, they do not know about, for example, "the stages through which a story, essay, or poem must normally pass before it reaches a presentable form": the tedious story

> of scribbled notes, often disjointed and sprawling; of rewritings; of eliminations and scribbled additions; of more rewritings; of later reshapings of the whole, new balancings, better proportionings; and of a final reconsideration of each part for its effect upon the reader. And after that, when the creative fire has spent itself, the mechanical

editing into a properly spelled, punctuated, paragraphed piece, matters which the schoolroom is prone to put as the first and only consideration.

As an environment for learning or practicing the art of writing, the composition class is not merely inadequate, it is probatly quite obstructive or even destructive. This fact is nowhere clearer than when one tries to imagine writers having to work within the confines of a composition class, trying there to do what they say they do when they write.

How could the artificial work rules and random standards of the composition class help students, if writing does indeed go on as in this description by an author who says that he doesn't even make an outline?

> When I am working on a piece of writing my mind keeps busy on it during my spare moments. While I am riding on the train, or even the subway, puttering about the garden, or sometimes (a bad practice) waiting to go to sleep at night I will be revolving the phraseology of various vital paragraphs.

Here is another description of an author's habits that is just as upsetting of the niceties of the composition class.

> I do not like to write. Invariably I put off whatever I have to do, dreading the strain, and turning to any possible diversion. When the clock or calendar tells me I can wait no longer, I generally find myself growing excited. Out of this excitement comes an idea about which my thoughts swarm in a crowded confusion. I cannot, however, begin until my opening sentence comes suddenly into my mind, generally

> with all the words in place, and always in the rhythm and tone of the entire article or chapter or section which is to be written. Thereafter my work is mere scrupulous obstinacy . . . . If I am in a sensible mood I ordinarily work no more than three or four hours at a stretch, but if my material proves resistant, I am likely to lose my senses and go on for ten or even twenty hours, struggling in the grip of an obscure compulsion, and raging at myself for my stupidity. When I am exhausted I give up, always perfectly convinced that I shall never write another line. Then, after sleeping or deliberately losing myself in something else, customarily I come back and finish the task without excessive effort.

If the composition class has little time to accommodate the vagaries of writers' habits, how much less has it for the moments that are the most important in writing, the ones "between the birth of an idea and the setting down of the first word" which are "the moments of actual composition." As more than one writer has said, "most writing is done away from the typewriter, away from the desk. . . . [It] occurs in the quiet, silent moments, while you're walking or shaving or playing a game or whatever; or even talking to someone you're not vitally interested in. You're working, your mind is working, on this problem in the back of your head. So, when you get to the machine it's a mere matter of transfer."

It is in the "quiet, silent moments" that the significant and profitable playing of the imagination goes on. Then it is that beginnings and endings are tried out; sentences are devised, rejected, reformulated;

words are sought for, details remembered. Then it is that ideas are explored, material collected, approaches felt out. Sometimes the shape and tone of the whole may be discovered, though with professional writers it is perhaps more often the case that what is discovered is no more than a single half-formed thought, elusive or intractable, which is somehow demanding expression.

And of course there are a whole series of such moments during the development of a piece of writing. For there is really no single beginning to composition. What we call the first word of a work comes into being only when the work is finished and ready for reading. In the actual development of a piece, how many ideas are born, how many first words are written can only be guessed. For it is probably true that most writers "work from some deep down place" without knowing "exactly what's going to happen" until after it has, when they have to begin editing their production, "giving it a reasonable shape, an explicit coherence."

VI

As has been said, the composition class is not the most congenial environment for the writer's chaos. The proofreader is more at home there than the creator. The curious fact is, however, that all or most writing assignments seem to presuppose creative ability on the part child. Take the paragraph, for example. Writing a paragraph is seemingly a simple, straightforward sort of activity. Because a paragraph is seemingly a theme in little, it is good for practice in the "basics" of composition, things like selecting and organizing details to achieve unity and coherence, to say nothing of emphasis and good punctuation. But where, in fact, is the "paragraph" to be found? This is not the paragraph in the sense of the group of sentences that a writer feels ought to be marked off as a significant stage in the flow of his thought. What the question refers to is the textbook concept of the paragraph as a group of sentences centered on or developing "one idea." Now this kind of short piece, standing by itself, is found, if at all, on newspaper editorial pages and in magazine front-matter like The New Yorker "Talk of the Town," and it is surely one of the most artful and artificial forms of writing in use today. People who do it have an enormous amount of verbal and logical skill and experience. But the fact is that the most difficult part of making one of these short pieces is probably not the writing. It is rather getting ideas that can be worked out in two hundred and fifty to five hundred words, or seeing how to handle a "big" idea in a little space. On the face of it, such abilities would seem to be quite beyond the capacity of most children; yet we require them every time we ask for an independent paragraph, and this is so even when we give a topic sentence for "development."

What has been said of paragraphs can be applied to all but the most mechanical work in the composition class. The children who sit there have the right to demand that we should recognize the essential creativity of what we are asking them to do. These children may not be writers, but they are writing. And it is difficult to see how they can learn to write (if that is what is wanted of them) unless they are treated like writers and given the working conditions that their job requires. In the light of this requirement, the importance of reforming the way we handle dialectal and mechanical problems is immediately apparent. Every time we treat a composition as an occasion for teaching grammar functionally or for refining a child's usages, we undermine the child's willingness to create in writing. Every time that we forget that a composition is something that a child has made and look at it simply as a sample of his dialect, by so much do we weaken his desire, such as it may be, to communicate his real thoughts and feelings to us--and probably to anyone else as well. In effect our actions tell him that our protestations of friendly interest--if indeed we make any--are as fake as the information about language that we ask him to believe and act upon. On the other hand, by taking a rational approach to language and then by refusing to use the theme as a harvest field of errors, we at least make a beginning for the immensely difficult task of turning the composition classroom into a place where creativity can be encouraged not destroyed.

The general argument here has been that the teacher's attitude is all-important. But of course what one wants to know is the operational consequence of the attitude, or what must be done to put the attitude into effect. Encouraging the desire to succeed is all well and good, and may indeed be the best and only course open to us. But students need to know how to do or make (achieve) a few of the conventions that have come to signalize success in composition. Presumably these processes are what a teacher should teach or give students an opportunity to practice.

Probably the basis of all writing, creative as well as practical, is accurate, detailed, specific, and full observation of the world. As Erich Fromm says, "The art of seeing is about the most important act one can perform in one's life." A man who has learned how to see a fish has at least the potentiality of seeing the parts and details of the great abstract questions of ethics and politics, to say nothing of the problems of business and industry. It seems to be the case, however, that human beings do not naturally see in detail but rather in broad outline. You can know that a thing is a locomotive without seeing that its wheels are arranged in 2-6-6-2 order, or knowing that that formula signified a locomotive with a leading axle, three pairs of driving wheels, and a trailing axle supporting the firebox, or indeed that such a locomotive consisted of two coupled, articulated parts and was an example of a second stage, developed in this country, of the Mallet locomotive, which was originally of French design. You can know that a thing is a picture without seeing whether the lines have been produced from wood or linoleum blocks, whether they have been drawn on metal or left by the action of an acid.

Such detailed perceptions must be learned. Indeed, so must the need for them. For when an object of discussion is familiar to all parties in the discussion, it is, of course, not necessary to describe it in detail; a general term will do. On the other hand, it is not hard to imagine the many times when specific descriptions are necessary, if communication is to be complete. One of the troubles of our students is that they can't tell when they can be general, when they should be detailed. One reason may be that they are not given an audience, or that they have one that is interested only in how their papers look.

Granted the horrid artificiality of the classroom, still there does not seem to be any reason in nature that prevents us from teaching the art of seeing. Surely situations can be invented that will make it seem reasonable, or at least not unreasonable, for children to look and report, more or less publicly, what they see. In the parlance of the nineteenth-century school rhetorics, this activity would be called description, the first of the four forms of composition that have come down to us from George Campbell. The uneasiness caused by memories of that old-fashioned and somewhat unrealistic system may, perhaps, be set at rest by noting what, in fact, is involved in the process of describing or of making descriptions.

As students prepare their reports, they will be analyzing their observation. Thus they will be gathering material--which is probably the first and certainly the most important step in the production of any piece of writing. As they do so, they will have to find words that will define or classify and particularize. They will have to consider the uses of general and specific words. If they are to make rational choices of material and words, they will also have to consider the whole complex idea of audience and communication situation. In the end, making final drafts of their reports (descriptions) they may have to take up questions of order, proportion, and emphasis. (But with younger or unskilled writers, such rather abstract problems had better be approached with restraint if not hesitation, at least by the teacher in discussion.) In general, then, the process of describing or of making descriptions involves all the significant stages in the process of writing. Its peculiar advantage for teaching is, simply, that it requires no special knowledge or experiences: the material is at hand--in the classroom, in the immediate world of the students. Furthermore, in the nature of its material and purpose, the process of describing draws students away from the kind of abstractions and generalities with which they normally carry on thought and discussion.

The beginning writer is often unable to do more than provide the reader with a general conclusion or opinion, often an ill-formed or ill-informed one. His failure to use specific materials--from details to examples--prevents not merely lively but even full communication. Another problem of the beginning writer is that he is almost always out of contact, as it were, with what he is doing. The result is a quite impersonal, inhuman sort of writing. To put the matter positively, the beginning writer needs a good deal of practice in finding appropriate material that he can use to move from general to specific; furthermore he needs to learn the usefulness of such movement. He needs to feel free enough about the act of writing so that he can express his own tone and attitude; at the same time he needs practice in selecting material and language for this purpose. He needs to be filled up; not, be it said, with "ideas" or "subjects"--which is the usual formula--but rather with words and constructions, details and facts. He needs material to write with.

The purpose of the lessons that follow is to give the child practice in the activities that are a necessary foundation to composition. It has seemed to the teachers who developed these lessons that young children or those who, at any stage of schooling, can be said to be beginning to learn to write, should have practice in the following areas:

a. observation of familiar material

b. gathering (listing, specifying) details

c. ranking and selecting items

d. word-selection (for accuracy), especially of verbs

Again, it may be that this is a wrong or impractical view. Maybe children ought not to be asked to learn to write, or maybe this is an act that cannot be taught. But we say we can and should, and we seem to expect children to learn how to turn out at least a thing as short as a paragraph. These lessons take these protestations seriously. They are an attempt to find the operations that will achieve the ends.

It should be noted that the lessons take up the problems of a beginning writer. The audience is not seventh-graders or twelfth-graders, neither twelve-year-olds nor seventeen-year-olds, neither disadvantaged children nor those who are college-bound, neither those in the first track nor those in the last. The audience is rather "children who are beginning to learn to write." Behind them, of course, there is another audience:

the teacher who wants (or needs) to discover what children who are beginning to learn to write need to know how to do. All things considered, this audience may not be so fictional--or mythic--as it at first sounds. And perhaps it would not be too pretentious to call the lessons, as a whole, a propaedeutics for composition.

Since no consideration has been given to the developmental characteristics of particular age groups, it is assumed that teachers will make the adaptations in style, tone, and--especially--timing that are called for by the particular audiences they have in front of them. A comparable adjustment should be made in expectations. None of the skills or concepts treated in the lessons is out of the range of, say, a fifth grader. The sophistication and complexity of practice and understanding will, presumably, vary with age and ability. But since the norms of such development are hardly known, or not at all, adjustments must be made practically not theoretically.

Introduction

Every minute of our public lives, whether we like it or not, whether we are aware of it or not, others are forming impressions of us. They observe our homes, our jobs, our clothes, our acquaintances, and our actions; and they form opinions about our character from these. Most of the time these observations are casual and undirected, and they produce quite general judgements--such as "He's a swinger" or "He's not with it"--which may not be followed by any action of importance. In most situations the observer is probably as little aware (consciously) of the causes of his opinions as the observed is of the results of his behavior and appearance. Both operate without much thought, and get along quite well too.

In certain situations, however, such generalized, more or less "natural" (or instinctive?) systems of inter-personal responses become, as it were, objects of thought. The observed wants to make an impression of some sort on the observer. The lover wants to project his sincerity and lover-ness, the general his authority and general-ness, the politician his wisdom or sense of expediency and politician-ness. The author (speaker or writer) wants to make contact with an audience, to make them feel something about himself. Most often what the author wants is that his audience should feel that he is a man of good character and good sense, or that their sympathy for him should not be lessened "by a low opinion of his intellectual abilities, and by a bad opinion of his morals."[1]

Of course want is a tricky word here. Perhaps it only means that, because the individual's role is clear, those who observe him can make a specific interpretation of his attempts to establish inter-personal relationships. In other words, when the role of the observed is clear, the observers have certain expectations. Whether the general wants to be thought a general doesn't matter; what probably does matter is that he knows that his audience wants to think him one. And therefore he must give them the signs of his role. This is what the speech teacher means when he tells his class that even before they begin to speak, their audience has some impression of them, has already formed an attitude that will make them more or less receptive to what is to be said.

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[1] George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, Book I, Chapter IX, (Vol. I, page 144 in the first edition, London, 1776.)

1

The importance of the relationship between speaker (writer) and audience has been with us ever since Corax and Tisias came out of Sicily and began to teach young Athenians the virtue of style as a means of pleasing the crowd and achieving ascendancy over it. Aristotle's description of the relationship conforms to the general Greek tradition:

> But since rhetoric exists to affect the giving of decisions--the hearers decide between one political speaker and another, and a legal verdict is a decision[2]--the orator must not only try to make the argument of his speech demonstrative and worthy of belief; he must also make his own character look right and put his hearers, who are to decide, into the right frame of mind. (Rhetoric, Book II, 1377b.)

What Aristotle seems to have had in mind was signs that "inspire confidence in the orator's own character"; the audience needs to feel that the orator has "good sense, good moral character, and good will." (1378a)

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[2] It is interesting to notice that the parenthesis includes forensic and legislative oratory, but omits epideictic. Presumably Aristotle would have said that in an epideictic speech the audience decides whether or not to accept the given characterization of the subject.

Centuries later in The Philosophy of Rhetoric George Campbell was telling the gentlemen of England much the same thing:

"In order to evince the truth . . ." to ". . .and procure it there a favorable reception."

The complete model is taken from The Philosophy of Rhetoric by George Campbell, Book I, Chapter VII (Vol. I, page 186 in the first edition, London, 1776).

For much, perhaps too much, of the history of rhetoric, the relationship between speaker and audience has been explored (or has seemed to be) in a fairly schematic way. The assumption seems to have been that the speaker has no significant characteristic save that of projecting, for example, "good sense, good moral character, and good will." And similarly the audience has been thought of as having no significant characteristic except, perhaps, a willingness to be influenced or a capacity for feeling sympathy (or its opposite) for a speaker. Even Aristotle says, "we assume an audience of untrained thinkers," "who cannot take in at a glance a complicated argument, or follow a long train of reasoning." (Rhet., 1357a) Indeed most of the time the relationship has been seen as somehow involving a deception of the audience by the speaker. Whether the good speaker is the man who knows or seeks the arguments that will make truth effective (as Aristotle said), or whether he is the skilled man who knows how to use language to "move" an audience (as the Sophists seem to have taught)--in either case he has been seen as seeking to gain ascendancy over his audience.

Modern theorists have somewhat complicated the theory by presupposing a separation between a speaker revealed by the document and the man who is speaking. In fiction and poems, they would say, there somehow comes to be a person, created by the author and somewhat removed from him, who is, as it were, a part or an effect of the work itself. In many ways this "speaker" is as fictitious as any character in the work. This is clearly so when there is a first-person narrator. But even with works written in the third person, it is supposed that a "speaker" is developed which is also a creation of the "real" author, or at least that the two can be distinguished. (See Wayne C. Booth, _The Rhetoric of Fiction_ [Chicago, 1961], especially the analyses in Section II.) In essay, article, or speech, a similar separation may be made.

Psychologists might say that the author (the "real" person who is doing the composing) is role-playing or simulating a person different from himself--a game-situation, the jargon has it. Literary critics like to call this other person, this second self, the writer's _persona_. (The word is the Latin word for mask. In this technical modern use, it is probably a specialization of Jung's name for his concept of the _total_ pattern of behavior that the individual uses to depict himself to the world.) Whether he intends to or not, every writer somehow asserts such a "self," if only because he does not and cannot present "all" of himself on any single occasion.

It has been noted[4] that the authors of the Declaration of Independence might have included "wife-beaters, slave-holders, and drunks." But of course the "speaker" of the Declaration, the person whom we somehow imagine to be uttering the great words, reveals none of the "real" psychological or social characteristics of the writers. In material, style, and thought, the Declaration presents a speaker who is only a public or legislative person, and specifically one having a full background in the British parliamentary, and the classical literary-philosophical, traditions. It is not so much that the real authors chose this role; it is rather that they had it thrust upon them by the exigencies of their situation, the expectations of their audience. To put it simply, the writers of the Declaration of Independence used the political dialect of their time.

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[4] By the writers of the tenth grade unit on "macro-rhetoric" at the Nebraska Curriculum Center.

Perhaps we should think of the speaker-audience relationship as one in which the audience works on the speaker, or as one in which the speaker responds to his feelings for what he supposes "people" to expect of a speaker in his situation as he defines it. There are constants, of course. In a way the speaker is always himself. (The _anima_ persists.) But still he is always making adjustments of that self to meet the needs of particular occasions. Senator Dirksen giving a Fourth of July oration would speak somewhat differently from Senator Dirksen in a Senate caucus, trying to achieve a consensus on a piece of legislation. Had the writers of the Declaration been trying to reach those embattled farmers and storekeepers who made the Revolution, they would probably have made some changes in the signs of their speaker. They would, perhaps, have been just a little less formal, a little less classical in their style; and for their material they might have turned more to the complaints of the workers and producers, less to those of the merchants and _fonctionnaires_.

But probably the total effect of such a Declaration would seem to us now pretty much like that of the one we have. For even those embattled farmers would have expected the speaker of such a legislative document to be classically trained and aware of "the course of human events" as described by the philosophers, orators, and poets that were then the staple of study in both school and college.[5] Today no one--neither people nor legislators (perhaps not even professors)--would expect signs in deliberative orators that they had had such an educational experience. The Declaration would be quite a different sort of work if written today, simply because of the different expectations that its audience (and hence its writers) would hold about the "speaker" of such a document. Even Roosevelt and Kennedy, the most "educated" and style-conscious Presidents in the last forty years did not--and could not--sound like one of the great oratorical legislators of the early nineteenth century; for their audiences would not have expected them to; indeed, probably wouldn't have "liked" them if they had.

ii

Establishing a voice is one of the chief problems of student writers. Sometimes they seem to have no voice at all, or a kind of institutionalized monotone. Knowing that they are being tested, they try to protect themselves by seeking anonymity in general material and a style that is impersonal and correct, according to their lights. At other times, they seem to be all voice, as it were. For, conscious that they are "writing," they borrow from whatever levels of the literary tradition they know or whichever ones they associate with "English." The result is a bookish and sentimental style and material, which in older or more experienced writers would be called simply vulgar. In either case, the product (that is, the paper or theme) is more or less removed from the reality of its composer, and the speaker that it suggests is likely not to have the qualities that are currently expected of speakers.

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[5] The earliest statutes of Harvard College (1642) set as part of the admission requirements the ability to read Cicero at sight. In 1655 a student transcription of the statutes adds the works of Socrates (though apparently as a means of learning Greek grammar). The admission requirements of the other colonial colleges were roughly similar. It should not be forgotten that down to the middle of the nineteenth century the curriculum of the American college was predominantly philosophical, grammatical, and rhetorical; a study of classical literature and history to prepare boys to study for the law and ministry.

The students' problem is not that they have no sense of audience. One might say rather that they work too hard to please, expend too much energy in trying to do what "teacher" wants. This is perhaps most true of students who are known as good writers. Generally overwhelmed by defenses of correctness and good English, and with their ears faintly ringing in tune to Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin or, if they are especially unfortunate, to Winston Churchill and Thornton Wilder, these good writers simply do not know, or at least they are not sufficiently aware of, the general and specific expectations that people nowadays have when they become readers or listeners--that is, members of audiences on particular occasions. As a result good student writers often use a mandarin sort of dialect that is peculiar to the classroom, and they produce as communications only themes.

The girl who wrote the following paper had an idea worth expressing, but the effect of her style is fussy and self-conscious, and many readers would conclude that she was less interested in developing her idea than in making herself feel like a writer, in the schoolroom sense of the word.

"The opportunities presented high school teens . . ." to ". . .experiences which result in a broader outlook on life."

The complete model is taken from the article "The Exchange Student: An Evaluation" found in the Chicago Tribune, January 31, 1965, Section ION, p. 6.

The paper is little more than a collection of undefined general statements, producing a minimum of meaning. From what the girl wrote, it is hard to tell whether she had ever been an exchange student, or was only writing out of a pious imagination. For in spite of her subject, at no time does she use any facts or any observed details of human beings in action. Instead she talks only of general words like "teens," "the cognizant scholar," "one," and "the student." She builds sentence after sentence around abstractions like "opportunities," "living as a member of a foreign family," "Living and studying abroad," "comparisons," "rewarding adventures." Naturally there are not many things that abstractions can do, and so for the most part the girl had to finish her sentences with verbs that are actual or virtual copulas. And typically, she reduced full verbs to nouns and adjectives: "idea of living," "living and studying," "necessitating the making," "a chance to arrive," "conclusions derived," and so forth.

It is perhaps a minor point, but still one worth noting as characteristic of the paper, that the girl handled formal English clumsily and insecurely. She has a foreign family living in its native environment. She uses "cognizant" and "versed" as simple attributive adjectives. Though she can put sentences together, she cannot always make them meaningful. She has opportunities bestowing innumerable experiences, and values them for doing so. But how can opportunities do anything at all, much less so lofty an action as bestowing. And why should there be a value to the experiences, when the nature and quality are left indeterminate? She has another puzzler in "The very idea of living as a member of a foreign family . . . is, in itself, priceless . . . ." Presumably *very* here means "mere." But if the mere idea of something is priceless, what of the actuality? Is it more or less than priceless? But the question is meaningless, for by "in itself" the girl seems to say that she is, indeed, interested in the idea alone, without any physical realization. Quite apparently the girl has what is known as a good vocabulary and some awareness of the structure of the English simple sentence. But she has little, if any, feeling for English idiom or the run of a complex sentence. Did she, perhaps, get her vocabulary from studying word lists and her sense of sentence form from doing exercises in sentence analysis?

On this analysis, the paper must be considered a failure because of its style (or anti-style) which suggests a speaker who is young, untrained, and inexperienced, perhaps even a little pretentious and certainly rather sentimental. But notice. The paper was submitted by a teacher to a metropolitan newspaper, one which is, incidentally, characterized by very lively, forceful, and specific writing. And the paper was published, as an example of good student writing, it would seem. If publication is a sign of success, then, in some sense, the paper is not at all a failure. And perhaps the girl was quite right to adopt the style she did, given that time and that place and that audience.

iii

As noted above, the effective audience of a writer is within his own mind. It is a sort of construction of his own intuitions or bright guesses about the public worth of his ideas. Take the writer whose work is most like that of students; that is, the man who does miscellaneous non-fiction articles for general magazines. On any particular occasion, he probably gets his sense of audience by a process something like this.

First this sort of writer may get a feeling that some subject is interesting people, or is about to do so.[7] Perhaps he has overheard some conversations on the subway or down at the supermarket or coffee shop. Perhaps he has noticed a series of similar news stories or broadcasts, or similar articles in magazines. Or perhaps he just catches a glimpse of human action which reminds him of a general idea.

Next he thinks over what he knows about the subject, what he has in his files, what he can easily work up about it. Then, if he begins to see material and interest developing, he probably is ready to think about placing the article. On the basis of his past experience, he knows that an article of the sort he has in mind could go in any one of several magazines. Why he chooses to approach one rather than another will most likely depend on rather irrelevant considerations like the rate of pay or the current relationship between the writer and the editor in charge of the kind of articles he does.[8] At any rate, for one reason or another, he sends off a query to find out whether the editor will be interested in the article he is thinking of writing.

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[7] Sometimes, of course, it is the editor who gives the writer the idea. See Glenn Gundell, WRITING--From Idea to Printed Page (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1949), pp. 207ff.

The editor will ask himself whether the proposed article will be read by some of the thousands (or millions) of people he needs to sell his magazine to. Most of the time he doesn't ask whether the magazine will be bought because of the article, but only whether, once it is bought for whatever reasons magazines are bought, the article will be read by some few or many of the purchasers.

Here at last the writer may be said to have an audience outside himself. But this audience is still not the readers of the article. It is again only a kind of internal construction of what the editor thinks will interest or satisfy some one of the various audiences among the people who buy his magazine. Assuming that he finds the subject a possible one, the editor will agree to look at the article. When he has it in hand, he will read it, asking himself all the time whether its qualities of language and thought, of style and form will appeal to or interest at least some of the people who buy his magazine. Of course, like the writer, the editor has nothing more substantial to go on than his own guesses and intuitions about the current interests and tastes of the various audiences among those purchasers.

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[8] In the June 1965 Esquire (pp. 76-9, 164), there is an article on the Harvard Society of Fellows. So far as I can see, the only Esquirean detail in the whole piece is the title: "The Best Fellows at Harvard." Except for this curiously inappropriate reminiscence of Owen Johnson, the article might have appeared in any general magazine.

Having so little that is certain to work with, the teacher is reduced to generalities (if not platitudes) when he tries to tell students what to do, what kind of decisions and choices they must make, if they are to convey useful and successful attitudes toward themselves and their audiences. At best, perhaps, he can only suggest some of the more obvious linguistic and formal signs by which readers make inferences about writers and their audiences. A teacher may, for example, warn students that they must choose words they use to describe themselves or to address their audiences. Students should also, it will be said, consider the degree and kind of order they will use, whether, for example, they will choose an associative or logical organizing principle. The choice of diction will be mentioned as important: Are there many or few words from the common vocabulary? Does the language show much or little literary influence? Another matter of importance is the syntax: Are the sentence patterns more or less colloquial? Do they suggest much or little acquaintance with literature, and with what sort? Most important is the material in the article: the number and kind of details, the source of examples and arguments, the relationship between argument and evidence (and the comparative amount of each), and the kind of thought process supporting the whole.

The following lessons are designed to make students aware of how such qualities of the finished work as those mentioned above affect the picture of themselves that they give their readers, and likewise the pictures of their audience that the readers infer. The technique is to order students to examine pieces of finished writing for the signs that led them to conclusions about the writer and his view of the audience. Of course these questions are focussed on the finished product; but then, it is hard to catch a writer writing and even harder to devise ways of watching the thought-processes of one if he would be caught. The hope is that even this indirect kind of analysis will help students toward an understanding of, or at least a feeling for, the kind of decisions they must make--indeed, the kind they do make--when they are engaged in composing.

Perhaps what a writer needs most is to become aware of himself writing, of what he is doing as he writes. There is a story about Thackeray that bears on this point. In the scene in Vanity Fair in which Rawdon Crawley discovers his wife having supper with Lord Steyne, Thackeray shows Becky ruined and terrified but at the same time admiring her husband for his rage and his strength. As he added the final detail, Thackeray is supposed to have thrown down his pen and cried, "That is a stroke of genius." On the one hand Thackeray was able to feel or invent the complex emotions of Becky in her wretchedness; on the other he could, as writer, enjoy his own artistic effect.

Unfortunately there are no rules, no easy gimmicks for directing student to this kind of self-consciousness about their work. Perhaps this lack is felt most keenly when teachers have to think about classroom presentation of the topics of writer's persona and the audience. Here, if anywhere, skill and control depend on experience and growth. There is no real theory to work from, but instead only some vague notions about the need to make contact with an audience. As a result, each writer must work in his own way, as best he can, toward an understanding of, or at least a feeling for, how he will manage his thought and his language so as to present to his audiences, if not the speakers that they want or expect, at least speakers that they will recognize as being, for some reason, worth attending to.

As a conclusion to these remarks on audience and persona, it may be a good thing to repeat Aristotle's great strictures at the beginning of the Rhetoric.

> Now, the framers of the current treatises on rhetoric have constructed but a small portion of that art. The modes of persuasion[9] are the only true constituents of the art: everything else is merely accessory. These writers, however, say nothing about enthymemes,[10] which are the substance of rhetorical persuasion, but deal mainly with non-essentials. The arrousing of prejudice, pity, anger, and similar emotions has nothing to do with the essential facts, but is merely a personal appeal to the man who is judging the case. . . . It is not right to pervert the judge by moving him to anger or envy or pity--one might as well warp a carpenter's rule before using it. (1354^a)

For unless these cautions be kept in mind it could rightly be said that rhetoricians have once again succumbed to the Sophists and have reduced their study to an exploration of the ways a speaker may dominate the emotions of his audience.

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[9] That is, logical arguments.

[10] "A sort of syllogism," according to Aristotle; i.e., one dealing with probabilities not certainties.

Introductory Discussion

The general objective of these lessons is to develop in students an awareness of or a sensitivity to the identity that is developed by (or contained in) all the observable surface characteristics--in short, the appearance--of a piece of writing.

Students will be becoming conscious of the qualitative or attitudinal significance of such characteristics of a work as the following:

a. word choice, especially of figures
b. sentence characteristics (length, structure, complexity, etc.)
c. texture of his discourse
d. expressed and unexpressed values and feelings
e. (even) the characteristics of his writing and manuscript

The following short exercise will introduce and dramatize the point to be made.

Procedure:

Exhibit two pieces of written work (student's papers or personal or business letters) to the class. Hold them up so that the class can see them but not read them. One of the papers should be neatly written and the other should be blatantly messy. Ask the students to comment on characteristics of the two papers. Almost certainly the answers will be phrased in terms of the writer, or in words which apply to persons not papers. ("It looks careless." "It's very neat.") Make the point that the mere appearance of the papers (irrespective of the content) led the class to make inferences about the writers: that the one is careless, messy, indifferent to his reader and his subject, and perhaps even disrespectful and dirty, while the other is neat, orderly, careful, and concerned for his reader's opinion.

As the students comment on the papers, ask if we can tell for sure that these characteristics are real characteristics of the authors. (Could the authors be unaware of the personal image which they present?) Could the personal images result from their ignorance of the effect the appearance of a paper has on the reader. Could the writer of the messy paper be a neat, logical, orderly person?) For the best effect, the answer to the last question should turn out to be "yes"; i.e. the paper should be a good one.

Following the above discussion you will want to remind the students that:

1. a reader receives an impression of the writer before he even begins to read the paper;
2. a writer presents an image of himself to the reader even though he may not be thinking about doing so;
3. the impression created by the appearance of a piece of writing on the reader can be very important.

Of course you should want to emphasize that neatness, orderliness, carefulness, and other such qualities of papers are, at best, of secondary value. They may be necessary, but they are hardly sufficient, causes of success; and admiration for them should be tempered.

Lesson I

Character-revelation in Plays

Note to teacher:

The material of this lesson is taken from plays, for the obvious reason the the dramatic "speech" (i.e. the unit of dialog) often is packed with linguistic clues on the basis of which the audience makes inferences about the character of the speaker. The dramatic speech is a conspicuous example of the use of the secondary suggestive power of words to convey meanings that frame or add to those of the actual sentence statements.

The speeches are intended to be used as teaching materials; that is, as the basis for class discussion. In each case the commentary indicates the points to be made; a summary or conclusion is also given. It is to be hoped that both points and conclusions can be elicited by discussion, not given by lecture.

The speeches in Exercise A are out of context and thus some situational meanings will be lost. If thought necessary, the exercise can be developed to include them.

Pages 18-27 of this theoretical paper, including quoted material and citations, are found on pages 18-27 of Unit I of the unit entitled "Writer and Audience--Identifying the Writer."

INTRODUCTION TO LESSONS
IN THE WRITING PROCESS

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Introduction to Lessons
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Northwestern Curriculum in English Composition

RATIONALE FOR THE CURRICULUM

For years the writers have been asking "How can we teach what is in the textbooks?" Once we started on this project, we began to ask, "What should be taught to children in the composition classroom?" We did not make much headway--what is known as basic research is not very plentiful.[1] But after all, research or not, there is a rich tradition of practice: for centuries teachers and writers have been recording what they do or think should be done. So we have gone ahead anyway. We have reviewed ancient and modern texts, and we have talked to and watched experienced teachers in the Chicago area.

It seems to us now that anyone planning a composition course should first of all want to ask the following questions:

1. What are the functions which constitute the process of writing?
2. How do people learn to perform these functions?

A helpful book on the first problem is WRITING--From Idea to Printed Page, a series of case studies on how articles were written for the Saturday Evening Post.[2] These case studies (along with our experience as writers and our observations of students as writers) have helped us analyze the writing process and break it down into a step-by-step procedure which all writers, amateur and professional, follow.

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[1] See Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones and Lowell Schoer, Research in Written Composition, N.C.T.E., 1963, 52-4, and Erwin R. Steinberg, Needed Research in the Teaching of English, U.S.O.E., 1963, 107-14 for discussions of areas of needed research in the teaching of composition.

[2] See Glenn Gundell, WRITING--From Idea to Printed Page, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1949, and Josephine K. Piercy, Modern Writers at Work, New York: Macmillan, 1930.

The Pre-Writing Steps:

1. Analyzing the writing assignment: Before the writer can plan his paper, he must know for whom he is writing, what the length limitation is (such as in publication), what the conventions (based on the situation) of subject matter, style, organization, etc. are.
2. Searching for a paper-idea: Starting from what he knows, the writer casts about until he feels he has something that will work in terms of the writing situation of the moment. Sometimes what he comes upon is no more than a feeling and at that one too indefinite, too uncertain to be called a purpose; really it will be something like a sense of direction, a feeling that if he starts writing along a certain line, something right will come into being. At other times he may get a sense of shape or form; he may have the beginning of his piece, or the end, or both; and the whole will grow from the part or parts. Sometimes the writer will have a notion or an idea--something that he wants to say, that he thinks others should hear or will want to. Generally speaking, what the writer doesn't have is material. And a writer writes by finding material that will somehow give reality to his feelings, his notions, his ideas.
3. Examining his knowledge of the selected topic for areas which may need investigation: The writer must now determine what

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[3] The first five steps, the pre-writing steps, are simultaneous to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the writer and the situation. Generally, the longer the paper is, the more clearly independent these steps will become.

information he will need to find before he can begin writing the paper; this is the step where he may choose to use an informal outline or a series of running notes on the subject to determine the gaps in his knowledge of the topic.

4. Gathering information: The writer may gather all of the information for the paper from memory, but more often he will need to consult books or other people (interviews) to find the information he needs. Occasionally he may perform his own experiments as a source of information about a subject.
5. Organizing the paper: The writer may do this formally or informally; he may write out his notes in a more or less formal outline of the paper, he may organize them in his head, or he may simply sort note cards into separate piles which he then arranges according to a predetermined plan. This plan may be taking shape simultaneously with the preceding two steps, particularly in the case of the short paper.

The Writing Step:

6. Writing the paper: Some writers prefer to rush through this step, writing the rough draft as quickly as they can, to "get everything down on paper" while their flow of thought is uninterrupted. Others write the first draft more slowly, thus eliminating the need for as much rewriting as the first group has. Occasionally, one finds a writer who writes and rewrites as he goes, so that when he writes the last sentence of the first draft, his paper is finished. The last writer is rare, however, and is usually found only among highly experienced writers; still, it may be the method that comes naturally to one or more students in a class.

The Post Writing Steps:

7. Revising the rough draft: Some writers revise as many as six or seven times before they are satisfied with the style, grammar, spelling, punctuation and minor details of organization. Revision is a time-consuming process; it is necessary to allow the paper to lie fallow after the first draft has been written and perhaps even after each of the revisions themselves. The writer needs time for reconsideration of the topic if he is going to be able to approach the revision with freshness.
8. Copying and proof-reading the MS for typographical errors.
9. Conferring with an editor: At this point professional writers usually submit their pieces to an editor or a group of editors and the finishing of the article becomes a collaborative effort. In the classroom the teacher may serve as editor. (Indeed this may be her only proper function.)

Of course writing is a highly creative enterprise; it is, after all, one of man's productive activities, like painting or carpentry or cake-baking. And so it is not to be expected that all writers will go through all of these steps. Experienced writers will no doubt combine some of the steps, especially those of the pre-writing stage. And students, as they mature and gain experience, will develop their own techniques and short-cuts, adapting and pacing the writing process according to their own needs and abilities. Or so they would, if they were ever made aware that in writing class there is a process to learn or to become proficient in, just as there is in, say, manual training or home economics.

II

Since shortly after the first printing of Perrin's Writer's Guide and Index to English, in 1942, college composition books have had a chapter, or at least a chapter title, on the stages of the writing process. And in the past few years Perrin's work has influenced the tradition in high school textbooks as well.

But in the books following Perrin the treatment of the writing process has uniformly been incomplete and superficial. One well-known text, for example, treats only five of the nine steps: Choosing and narrowing a subject, collecting materials, organizing or outlining, writing, and enough revision to achieve a polished final copy.

This text combines the first five of our steps to make only three. Although the professional writer may do this, the student must experience each of the steps independently.

One text mentions rather casually that the writer should have a notion of the approximate length of the composition before he selects his topic. This is the only suggestion of the first of our nine steps, analyzing the writing situation, which the book makes. Obviously knowing the expected length of the composition is important; but even more important is knowing for what audience one is writing and what the limitations of that audience are. The book does not suggest how a writer determines the length of the paper, but rather implies that the length will be determined for the student (probably by the teacher).

The instruction on selecting and narrowing a subject seems equally inadequate. The suggestions include choosing a subject in which the writer is interested and on which he either has or can find enough material for a good composition (whatever that is). The subject is to be limited according to the expected length of the composition. The following is a fairly typical example of how limiting a subject is illustrated for students:

1. Athletics
    2. Sports in the United States
        3. Football: America's Most Popular Sport
            4. The Life of a Pro Football Player
            The Most Exciting Game of the Season
            My Experiences in High School Football

Such "limitations" seem to be based mostly on the obvious "parts" of a large subject.

Note in the second stage the possibility of further parallel subdivisions:

2. Sports in the United States
    - Professional
    - Amateur
        - High School
        - College
            - Intramural
            - Varsity
                - Football
                - Baseball
                - Basketball

What determines this partitioning?

Note, too, that even at the final and presumably satisfactory level of "The Life of a Pro Football Player" the student still has only a title, nothing at all that suggests the shape and content of a paper. What _about_ the life of a football player? Who is to be told? How is the telling to be shaped?

What is done with "My Experiences in High School Football," for example, will depend on whether it is written for a high school English class or with a view toward publication, and then whether it is to appear in a school paper or, say, _Reader's Digest_, _True Confessions_, or perhaps the _New Yorker_. The example does not show the student how the author has limited (on what basis he made decisions) but merely indicates what the result of a process of dividing may be.

It is also said that limiting the subject must be done with reference to the writer's purpose, that the purpose of the composition determines its scope. (That is true enough, but the purpose must be related to the audience the author is writing for.) As an example of a verbalized statement of a writer's purpose, there is something like the following: "My purpose in this composition is to state my objections to some modern movies." Such a statement is not much help to the beginning writer as he plans and writes because it does not pinpoint the areas in which he is likely to have problems. How will he explain? And to whom will he explain? Considerations like these will keep his eyes firmly fixed on the problem of "explaining."

Similarly, steps three (examining knowledge of the selected topic for areas which may need investigation) and four (gathering information) of our nine steps are combined as collecting materials. Students are instructed to list all ideas (not material) which they have on the topic, and then to eliminate those which do not fit the purpose of their essay. This process seems to put the cart before the horse. Before a student can make a formal list of "appropriate" items, he must conduct some survey of the field to fill gaps in his background knowledge.

In the next step, organizing materials, the books typically concentrate on the mechanics of the formal outline rather than on how writers make decisions about the organization of their compositions. One book tells students to group similar ideas together, to arrange the groups of ideas in some sort of logical order, and tells the student that as he orders his ideas, he is determining the structure and content of his paper.

But once again, the book makes no suggestion as to the kinds of decisions the student makes [illegible] this organizing process, or how he should go about making such decisions. The student is, evidently, expected to know intuitively what these decisions are. For example, what is a "logical order"? Apparently it is one that shows the relations between "ideas," or the fact that certain "ideas" are related. But in the end the question always is what kind of relation is involved? Sinks and dishwashers are both found in kitchens. Are they related because they are in a kitchen? Or because they are means of washing? In either case (assuming by some odd chance that sinks and dishwashers are going to be in a paper) the ultimate question is not about their likeness to each other but rather about how they are going to fit into a paper of some sort.

Most texts concentrate the student's attention while writing the first draft on matters which are really part of revision. Among them are length of introduction and conclusion, paragraphing, transitions between paragraphs and transitional devices. None of these matters can be worked on until the writer has something to work with; in other words, until he has written the first draft. And similarly what is called "enough revision necessary to achieve a polished final draft" is generally briefly treated, sometimes in less than one full page of text. No instruction is given in the various activities which comprise revision.

III

Lessons in composition must do more than merely mention the steps of the composition process; they must instruct the student in how to perform each step. Our lessons attempt to avoid these weaknesses which are common in textbooks by introducing students to the methods of development, the typical subject matter, and the rhetorical devices used in a wide variety of writing situations. It is important, however, that there be a systematic presentation of this material. Certain types of writing contain similar problems for the writer. By grouping writing by types, one economizes on the amount of effort required to teach composition, and orders the presentation to avoid confusing students.

The four forms of discourse--narration, description, exposition, and argumentation--are a possible means of systematizing composition instruction. The forms of discourse were conceived by Hugh Blair, a Scottish rhetorician of the early 19th century, as a means of describing some of the elements of prose writing. But under the influence of another Scot, Alexander Bain, who wrote during the second half of the century, the forms came to be used first as a classification scheme for essays and paragraphs, then as a means of making composition assignments, and finally as a method of organizing the composition course. During the 20th century, the four forms, or some variation of them, have been used to classify both paragraph types and entire essays.

For example, Modern Composition, by Stegner, Sauer, and Hach, uses the four forms to classify four major kinds of essay.[4] Albert Marckwardt and Frederic Cassidy also use the forms of discourse to categorize essays, but modify the classification system slightly by adding a category of dialogue and including persuasion as part of exposition.[5] Richard Corbin and Porter Perrin combine persuasion with exposition, and add a category of newspaper reporting, but use this modification of the four forms to characterize single paragraphs.[6] Whether used as description of single paragraphs or entire essays, the four forms and their variants are the dominant organizational pattern in high school and college texts today.

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[4] Wallace E. Stegner, Edwin H. Sauer, and Clarence W. Hach, Modern Composition, Book IV, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

[5] Albert Marckwardt and Frederic G. Cassidy, Scribner Handbook of English, New York: Charles Scribner, 1960.

[6] Richard K. Corbin and Porter G. Perrin, Guide to Modern English, Upper Years, Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1960.

But serious attempts to classify particular pieces of writing into the categories provided by the four forms of discourse show that the terms "narration," "description," "exposition," and "argumentation" do not adequately describe either single paragraphs or entire essays, and are therefore of doubtful value as a means of organizing a composition course.

The weakness of the classifications provided by the four forms is easily seen whenever the system is put to the test. The categories do not ever quite stand up. It is perhaps possible to find examples of "pure" narration. But such pure forms are rare; and it is more typical to find narration mixed to some degree with description. This leads to many problems, uncertainties, and anomalies. For example, an essay by Justice William O. Douglas, is classified in one book as "narration." And it is true that there is a story line which narrates what happened to some boys spending the night in the Tieton Basin. But notice the following paragraph, which is typical:

"It was in 1913 when Doug was 19 . . ." to "the challenge came to us as the sun touched her crest."

The complete model is taken from the book Of Men and Mountains by William O. Douglas (New York: Harper Brothers, 1950), p. 316.

In this piece, as in much so-called narrative writing, there is actually much interplay between narration and description: the narrative sequence is supported by details that can only be described as descriptive statements, referring to the appearance of the boys, their surroundings, and the weather.

The situation becomes even more involved when one attempts to classify essays containing expository and persuasive elements. Note the following essay which is classified as "description" in a popular high school text:

"The deserted shack which I believe . . ." to ". . .and the creek is no more than two hundred yards away."

The complete model is taken from the book The MacMillan English Series, 10 by Thomas Clark Pollock, Marion C. Sheridan, Dorothy Williams, and John Maxwell (New York: MacMillan, 1964), pp. 159-160.

Certainly much of the paragraph consists of description, including a detailed picture of the cabin and explicit directions for locating it. But the "I believe" phrase in the opening sentence causes some doubt as to whether the paragraph is "really" description. It is possible, of course, for a person to describe his beliefs, but in this essay, the author seems to be using the description of the cabin to support or explain why he feels the cabin is suitable for the group's purposes. Thus there is question whether the essay should be classified as expository or as descriptive. The last sentence adds further confusion into the classification problem; the phrase "we should" clearly implies that the author is attempting to persuade the audience to accept his recommendations. The description of the cabin (the explanation of why it is suitable) is intended to support the persuasive effect of the essay.

The four forms of discourse clearly cannot be applied to "mixed" paragraphs with much success. It is true, of course, that some of the books recognize this problem. Indeed in order to retain the four forms as an organizing principle several texts announce firmly that modes of discourse *can* be mixed. In *Our English Language*, for example, the authors state:

"Seldom is one form of discourse used . . ." to ". . .will certainly make use of description."

The complete model is taken from the book *Our English Language, 4th Course* by Matilda Bailey, Lalla Walker, Rosamond McPherson, and Jerry E. Reed (New York: American Book Company, 1961), p. 85.

The authors' development of narrative and descriptive writing techniques and characteristics is successful. But they run into difficulty when they have to distinguish description from exposition. Under *description* they ask the student to write short descriptions of such things as "a man's walk," "gossip," and "a train at night," (p.91). Under exposition they ask the student to characterize "getting breakfast," "popularity" and "building a fire," ([illegible]. 92). But how is describing "a man's walk" different from characterizing "getting breakfast" or "building a fire"? Both problems deal with a process. It is extremely hard to see what differences in writing will result because one "form" is called description and the other exposition, especially when the purpose of the exposition is said to be to characterize the subject of discourse.

When one accepts the concept of mixed modes, about all that happens is that the category "exposition" expands. After all, even when one writes *pure narration or description, he is explaining something and* his essay can be considered expository in some sense. The expository category expands, becomes almost synonymous with the term essay, and thus becomes not category at all.

The central weakness of the four forms is that their criteria for classification are both ambiguous and inconsistent. They seem to classify partly on the basis of type of writing, and partly on the basis of author's purpose.

One can legitimately describe sentences such as "Tom is a law abiding citizen," and "Yesterday he stole a car," as being descriptive and narrative "types" of writing. But it is far more difficult to define a similar expository "type" of sentence. One which explains the reason why Tom stole the car, "He is a kleptomaniac," must be classified as expository. But its "type" is clearly descriptive; the verb is links Tom with "kleptomaniac" and thus the sentence describes what Tom is. The term "expository" does not really describe a "type" of writing parallel to narrative and descriptive "types," but states the author's purpose in writing, "to explain." Similarly, persuasive writing can only be classified in terms of the purpose of the author, "to persuade." But purpose of the author and type of writing cannot be used consistently as a classification scheme. One can write, for example, a descriptive paragraph or essay, "building a fire," with expository purpose, to explain "how to build a fire."

It can be argued, of course, that although the terms "narration" and "description" are concerned with writing "types," still the four forms of discourse are all based on the criterion of purpose, that is, the author's purpose may be to narrate, to describe, to explain, or to persuade. But even if this interpretation of the four forms is accepted, they fail because the categories are not exclusive; an author can easily have a dual purpose in writing--to describe and explain how to build a fire.

In the following sentence, for example, the author has at least four purposes which are evident in different clauses and phrases:

"The last scene, which is a . . ." to ". . .and his marvellous photographer, Hiroshi Murai."

The complete model is taken from the article "The Current Cinema" by Brendan Gill, found in The New Yorker, XLI (March 27, 1965), 169.

The author begins the sentence with the purpose of describing (The last scene . . . is . . .), but describes through narration, presenting a capsule summary of the event outside the castle. But he also has the purpose of explaining that the scene "is surely among the most beautiful and terrible ever filmed," and the sentence closes persuasively, implying that the public should recognize the talent of the director and photographer. The four forms of discourse, if considered to represent the author's purpose, overlap to such a degree that classification becomes impossible.

Because the four forms of discourse do not present a precise classification of writing, composition teaching based on them must also be imprecise. The four forms of discourse simply do not provide a useful, accurate framework within which the teacher can talk about an expository paper. She may mean anything from a description of fire building to an analysis of the causes of the Civil War, and the student is not given much help by being told to write an expository paper which may be almost anything from pure description to detailed analysis.

IV

Above all, the categories of description, narration, exposition, and argumentation are unhelpful because they do not answer any of the questions that students must ask when they have to write. This is because categories of purpose or logical mode, such as these are, do not have any bearing at all on the formal qualities of papers. There is no connection between the term "description" and the "parts" of the written piece that the student is to produce. What is a proper beginning for a description? And what is to be done to begin a beginning for a description? Or suppose the assignment is to write an argumentative paper on, say, "Football is a great benefit to the humanities." What is the form of such a paper? How should it begin? How should the material ("ideas") be disposed? If the beginning is an historical statement about football and the humanities, what should the next stage of the paper be: an anecdote about Knute Rockne's famous locker room orations? a quotation from Robert Maynard Hutchins or Charles William Eliot? statistics comparing salaries of football coaches with those of professors of humanities? or perhaps a reference to the important part played by athletics at certain stages of Greek education?

Where are the answers to questions such as these to be found in a classification system in which the criteria of discrimination are as ambiguous and inconsistent as those we have been discussing?

This study has attempted to devise a classification system which does not have the inherent weaknesses of the four forms of discourse, and thus will be more useful as a means of organizing lessons in composition. There are numerous ways in which writing can be classified. A typology can be based, for example, on the purpose of an author, the audience to which the writing is addressed, the subject matter of the paper, the degree of objectivity of the author, or the organizational type of the paper. To be adequate, however, the classification scheme must meet three criteria:

1. It must be accurate and consistent, presenting categories into which all writing can be unambiguously classified.
2. It must contain a small number of categories. An extremely accurate classification system utilizing fifteen or twenty categories would be too complex to be of practical value.
3. It must provide a useful means of organizing lessons in composition for classroom use.
4. It must, at least approximately, derive from what authors in fact do.

Criteria 1 and 2 simply state that the categories must have a high power of generalization, that is, they must cover a wide range of writing with as few categories as possible. Criterion 3 adds the restriction that the classification system must be of use to the composition teacher if it is to be of any value. Criterion 4 adds the further point that the system must be useful to the student.

This study will utilize a typology which seems to meet these criteria successfully. It is based on the functions which an author performs as he collects, organizes, and communicates information to his audience. The three functions which he can perform are those of reporting, analyzing, and evaluating. An author may perform more than one function in a single essay: the categories Report, Analysis, and Evaluation are placed in increasing order of complexity as the author performs one, two, and three functions, respectively. As an analyst, the author also functions as a reporter, and in the evaluation, he also reports and analyzes.

In the Report, the author observes an event, object, or situation, and attempts to recreate it for his audience as objectively as possible.[11] The Report relies on a mixture of narrative and descriptive writing. If an author is to report on a football game, for example, he can summarize important plays, describe the size of the crowd, or present an anecdote about the dog that wandered onto the playing field. He clearly selects the events which he considers most important for reporting to his readers, and must use his judgement in this selection. But his aim is to present an accurate report so that his readers will know precisely what happened during the course of the afternoon.

When the author functions as an analyst, he looks beyond events, objects, and situations to locate intangible factors which surround them. He can, for example, estimate the effects which the loss of the game will have on the team's morale, search for the factors which contributed to the loss, or state which plays were turning points. The author may also synthesize contributing factors, or "dissect" the situation into parts. In analyzing, however, he must also report; as he attempts to locate the turning points in the game, he must report these plays to supply background to his audience. The amount of reporting which he does will depend upon the background of his audience, but he msut supply "details" through reporting. Even though the author must use his own judgement in the Analysis, in order to locate causes and effects, or to synthesize or anatomize factors surrounding the game, he still attempts to maintain objectivity, and tries, to the best of his ability, to present the "true" picture of the intangible factors surrounding the situation.

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[11] No piece of writing can be considered completely objective; the choice of data to be reported and choice of words for the report will invariably add a degree of subjectivity to the writing. But it is generally quite easy to determine if an author is attempting to be objective about his subject or if he is deliberately allowing his opinion to show through.

In the Evaluation, however, the author does allow his personal opinions to enter his writing. He may suggest what is right or wrong, or good or bad about a situation; he may suggest how something could have been done better, or how something ought to be done. To return to the football game, the author might criticize the actions of the coach or the behavior of the players, or recommend that a different player be allowed to call the plays. His evaluation of the game may not be stated directly but implied through the satirical tone of the essay. But as he functions as a critic, the author must also function as a reporter and as an analyst. As he criticizes he must report details about the game, and analyze the situation in order to support his opinion.

This classification scheme avoids the problems which are "built in" to the four forms of discourse. The classification is unambiguous and consistent, and because the categories are cumulative, that is because the more complex forms include simpler ones, the problem of dealing with "mixed" modes of discourse is eliminated. The categories further seem to supply a useful way of organizing the composition course; beginning with simple, yet basic, reporting, the student can progress through analysis to highly complex, subtle methods of evaluation.

But these categories alone, do not supply us with all of the structure needed for a set of lessons on compostion. The function categories deal primarily with methods of organization and structure, concentrating on what an author can do with his basic data, and how he can structure what he does with it. Lessons on prose writing, however, need to discuss important elements like style, tone, subject matter, degree of generality, and effects of audience, which are not stressed in a classification scheme which is built around author function.

To further structure the lessons it is useful to divide prose writing into three kinds which are roughly organized in terms of style and the audience and situation for which a paper is written. This grouping treats Practical, Journalistic, and Academic writings. It does not attempt to create an exact classification system, but rather groups papers which have some factors in common for purposes of economical instruction.

Practical discourse includes brochures, circulars, reports, manuals, and letters. Such writing is generally addressed to a small audience, the nature of which is well known to the writer. Style of writing in practical discourse varies; some business letters may be quite formal in contrast to the casual style of friendly letters. The "binding factor" of practical discourse is that it is the sort of writing which is frequently used in personal and business situations for "practical" purposes of communication.

Journalistic discourse is characterized by the style and tone of much writing found in popular magazines and newspapers. Much of the writing done in the classroom, particularly in grammar school and the early years of high school is actually journalistic in style, even though it is not intended for publication. When a student is asked to report on a recent event, describe how to build a fire, or write a book report, his writing style is usually rather informal, and is similar to that used in much magazine and newspaper writing.

Academic discourse includes scholarly writing. It is generally intended for an audience with a highly specialized background, and has a formal style as exhibited in professional journals, dissertations, and research papers. Some academic writing is done in the later years of high school, as students learn how to write a research paper or a critical evaluation, but it is important to emphasize that not all "in school" writing is academic. Through the 10th ar 11th grades, very little real academic writing is done, and composition courses stress practical and journalistic prose writing.

The function categories--Report, Analysis, and Evaluation--supply a means of unambiguously classifying prose writing; giving a framework which clearly indicates the basic role the author plays in bringing information to his audience. The writing kinds--Practical, Journalistic, and Academic--support the function categories by supplying an organization within which the teacher can stress style, tone, audience, and subject matter. The categories thus combine to form a three by three framework:

	Practical	Journalistic	Academic
Report	P-R	J-R	A-R
Analysis	R-A	J-A	A-A
Evaluation	P-E	J-E	A-E

The purpose of establishing this matrix is not simply to supply a pigeon-holing device; the matrix will serve as a pattern of organization for our composition lessons. The lessons can progress either vertically, or horizontally through the audience-style groupings, depending on which aspects of a paper are to be stressed by the lessons.

V

Having decided upon a typology by which to structure the lessons in kinds of prose, we still had to find out how students learn to write before we could create our lessons. Following our experience as writers and our observation as teachers, we decided that students begin to write by simply writing down their speech. As they read, they gradually learn some of the conventions of written English. Their minds synthesize the writing techniques they find in reading material, and when they write, they begin to use these synthesized conventions. A grade school student who had a steady reading diet of comic books might well use the conventional method of inserting sound effects into the story by printing BANG! or WHOOSH! in large capital letters in his own writing. Or the child who has read many fairy tales may end all of his stories with "and they (we) lived happily ever after." He has found that this is an effective way to end a narrative because it "ties up all the loose ends" and, not knowing any other way, uses it to "get out of" the essay.

Thus, we might say that one way to teach children to write effectively is to acquaint them with more of the conventions of written English. For this reason, we have built our lessons around carefully selected writing models which embody the structural principles to be emphasized by a particular lesson. The examples are presented to the student, who is led through discussion to "discover" the writing techniques being used. By using models in this way, we hope to help the student learn to read closely and intelligently and to develop his own repertory of writing conventions to draw on when he writes.

The lessons ask the student to apply a principle he has learned, for example, a principle of good reporting, to several other models to see how it has been adapted by different authors. Finally, the student is asked to use the principle in his own writing, sometimes directly imitating the original model, but usually making wider, more original applications of the principle.

We feel that a student must write and write often if he is to learn to write well. On the other hand, the student should be given careful training in the various steps of the writing process before he is expected to be competent in them. We feel that a student can learn to perform some of the writing functions without doing all of them. Therefore, we have written some lessons which ask the student to perform only one of the steps of the writing process without going on to complete a paper. These lessons are found throughout our curriculum, but are concentrated in the lower grades. The assignments which call for completed papers are few in the units for the lower grades. These lessons give the students an introduction to the pre-writing processes and do not ask them to perform processes which they have not yet studied. In the upper grades emphasis shifts to writing practice, while reinforcing what the student has learned in the lower grades about the writing processes.

But even on these grade levels, writing is asked for less frequently than the present "theme a week" assumption requires. We believe that if the student is trained in the step-by-step process, he ought to be given time to perform it each time he writes. That good writing requires time is not in question, but whether we presently allow students enough time to write is. A teacher who assigns out-of-class papers which are due after only two or three days unwittingly encourages students to rush through assignments. The students will learn to write slowly and carefully only if teachers encourage this attitude by allowing enough time for the students to complete each step separately and carefully. Even in-class writing assignments should allow time for the various pre-writing steps.[12] Perhaps they can be handled in class the previous day or out of class as homework for the actual writing period. The student who comes to class to write an examination has, after all, ostensibly performed the pre-writing steps before he comes into the room to write the test. One way in which teachers might learn to pace their writing assignments is to write a paper themselves each time they ask the students to write. Teachers would then be able to judge the amount of work which their own assignments require and adjust the frequency of their assignments accordingly (after having made allowances for the difference in maturity and skill, of course.)

The extensive use of prose models in these lessons presents a special problem to the teacher who has not studied the literary or rhetorical analysis of the essay in college. Most teachers learn to analyze a poem or a short story or a novel or a play in their college literature courses; but very seldom does the college course look closely at the structure and writing techniques used in an essay. Thus, when the teacher who has not learned to analyze an essay is confronted with the problem of teaching the essay or the composition of an essay to his students, he often resorts to a discussion of the topic of the essay rather than its technique. When he teaches poetry, he discusses the devices of poetry, emphasizing the poet's techniques which convey his message; but when he teaches essays, not knowing the literary devices of the essay, he resorts to a discussion of ideas dealt with by the essay: "Are we free to disobey an unjust law?" ("Civil Disobedience") or worse yet "Has anything as funny as this ever happened to your family?" ("The Night the Ghost Got In").

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[12] Richard Braddock, Richard-Lloyd Jones, and Lowel Schoer recommend that primary grade children be given 20 to 30 minutes, intermediate grades 35 to 50 minutes, junior high students 50 to 70 minutes, high school students 70 to 90 minutes, and college students 2 hours to write, Research in Written Composition, p. 9.

Although the lessons contain fairly detailed commentary on the models which they use, we offer the following explication of rhetorical devices and compositional matters found in the pieces of writing in the pamphlet which accompanies this "Introduction." You will notice that the explications do not comment on every aspect of each essay, but rather only on that aspect which we felt the particular essay was strongest in. Just as there are few perfect poems or few perfect plays, there are few perfect essays. For instructional purposes the most positive use for models is to concentrate on the areas in which they succeed rather than analyzing their failures. Therefore, in these models and in those found in the lessons the emphasis is on the aspects of the composition which are well done. These comments will also place the essays in the typology matrix and will, we hope, further clarify the categories. Finally, these comments are indicative of the kind of things which the composition teacher can say about an essay. We hope that these comments will give direction to your efforts and help you generate analyses of your own.

Rita Hansen
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Stephen Judy

I. Using Literary Models

The Demonstration Center at Euclid Junior High in Cleveland (sponsored by Project English) is placing substantial emphasis upon use of literary models in the teaching of composition. Other Centers may be giving some attention to the use of models, but at Euclid the staff preparing and demonstrating composition lesson plans depends upon them. George Hillocks, Project Director at Euclid, said, "We rely heavily on models. Most of our composition lessons or units get some energy from literary models."[1]

In a recent article, Don M. Wolfe, arguing that traditional grammar is more useful than structural linguistics in teaching style, uses literary models to make his point.[2] Wolfe has pupils imitate the particular grammatical patterns in quotations he selects from well-known writers. For example, one pattern calls for "introductory prepositional phrases for background." Here's Scott Fitzgerald:

> On the pleasant shore of the French Riviera, about halfway between Marseilles and the Italian border, stands a large, proud, rose-colored hotel.

The student describes a building or a thing he knows in a sentence like the model. He begins with a background image in a prepositional phrase naming a general place and then moves to exact identification. Using Fitzgerald's sentence as model, a student of mine wrote:

> Almost in the middle of downtown Chicago, midway between the lake and the heart of the Loop, looms the copper-green, life-size statue of Chung-Chi, chief of the Sioux.

In an even more rigorous use of models, William D. Baker recommends the verbatim copying-out of professional models. Believing that neither the grammatical rule method of teaching language and composition nor the scientific linguistic method will work, Baker argues for what he calls the "natural method." The natural method is creative, not analytical: "analysis detracts from the act of composition." Baker's students keep notebooks; they fill them with transcriptions--"passages copied from daily reading." In support of copying, Baker quotes Addison--"In imitating great writers I've always excelled myself"--and Benjamin Franklin--"I compared my Spectator with the original, discovered some of my faults and corrected them"--among others. Exact word-for-word copying means that "the student will have worked in the company of a professional, which is what the wise learner in any field wants much to do."[3]

Let me next give examples of the uses of models found in junior-high language composition texts.

Example 1. From the reading of paragraphs from "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "The Most Dangerous Game," the authors of MODERN COMPOSITION, Book 2 show how professionals treat setting, character, and mood. A writer "makes his feelings the reader's feelings" "by proper use of words." Students are asked to "note how skillfully this author establishes the setting and environment." This assignment follows: "Rewrite the following passage to give it a better setting and to create an interesting mood. Be careful to make your choice of adjectives exact and your choice of verbs precise."[4]

Example 2. In JUNIOR ENGLISH IN ACTION, Book I, models of no literary consequence are used for teaching paragraphing. Students are asked to read two blocks of unparagraphed prose and follow these instructions: "Divide . . . into paragraphs. Copy the first three words of each paragraph and write the title you would give each selection. Each selection contains four paragraphs."[5]

Example 3. In ENGLISH AT WORK, Course 1, student compositions are used as models of good opening sentences in themes on personal experience. The opening sentence "is important because it tells your reader what to expect, whether you are sad or happy, embarrassed or triumphant . . . . If you want to tell a story about something that happened to you, you must convince your reader that this incident really took place. This means telling the when and the where."[6]

There's more value to be squeezed from good literary models than the "read, note, and then write carefully" adjurations of Example 1, above. The paragraphing exercise in Example 2 seems to me inoffensive busywork. (Would the perceptive student who has learned that paragraphing is as much a visual as a meaning device be penalized for his "wrong" answers?) And would students following the counsel of the authors of Example 3 be learning something useful or something that is basically confusing? (The first model from ENGLISH AT WORK begins, "I have had many embarrassing moments in my life, but one stands out from all the rest." The second model begins, "An extremely curious thing happened to me last week." Perhaps both models "tell the reader what to expect": but neither sentence, it seems to me, is half so interesting as the following sentences in each model:

1. We couldn't wait to plunge into the foaming water at Atlantic Beach that hot August afternoon.

2. I had gone on Saturday afternoon to the Bronx Zoo. As usual, I turned into the house of the meat-eaters first of all . . .

Of course, authors of these three junior high texts neither claim nor promise imaginative uses of models in their texts. Yet is is remarkable that they offer so little. In the dozen texts skimmed over for examples of model use, the three reported on above seemed limited but the most explicit.

Texts for the senior high tend to display more imagination in their uses of literary and student models. ENGLISH ARTS AND SKILLS,[7] a twelfth grade text, acknowledges several dozen sources ranging from Volkswagen and Quaker Oats ads to Hemingway and Catherine Drinker Bowen. An example using models both as source and strategy is found in GUIDE TO MODERN ENGLISH (Upper Years). A model from Somerset Maugham discusses DAVID COPPERFIELD. Maugham says that David is "a bit of a fool" and "remains the least interesting person in the book." The authors of the text say that the reader is persuaded to Maugham's view by his use of convincing details. Students then study other models (using details for enumeration, examples, or showing cause and effect) and attempt to emulate them.[8]

The following examples from college rhetorics go usefully from something to write about to a plan for writing.

> Example 4. Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Green Donkey-Driver" entertainingly tells of the narrator's efforts to steer a donkey through a village. After treatment of Stevenson's tone and style, there is this composition assignment: Write "about a predicament in which you found yourself at sometime, giving special attention to discovering and maintaining just the right balance between how you felt then and how you feel as you tell about it." Both the subject (a predicament) and a way of treating it (balancing the anguish of the

moment against the detachment of the present) derive from the model.[9]

Example 5. Beginning with Paul Horgan's "Pages from a Rio Grande Notebook," the editors of this rhetoric, subtitled "Readings for College Composition," show how the model takes the reader from one place to another in sequence. Students are asked to follow in writing some course of their own: "Use any of the following subjects . . . : Chicago to Denver by air; notes made along the turnpike; Dugan's Alley." Both source for subject and strategy are here; the editors' preparatory questions deal with style, allusion, and technique.[10]

Example 6. In dealing with argument, the editors present the Third Knight's speech from Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral." They help students to see what the speech intends, how it achieves its purpose, and deal with its organization and logic. The writing job from this model uses both subject and method: "Accused of one of the crimes below, you must defend what you did as logical and just. Use logic to build defense, but bear in mind the particular audience who judge you. (a) Tearing up a traffic ticket, (b) Falling asleep during class, (c) Knocking down a man who insulted you."[11]

Any of the three examples cited from college texts might profitably be adapted for use in junior high school. Indeed, in the cases of the Stevenson and Horgan models (Examples 4 and 5), the very models might be used and parallel assignments be made. Moreover, the teacher willing to use models mainly as source of subject can find innumerable examples in college texts. For example, the editors of IMAGINATION AND INTELLECT use Mann's "The Two Faces of Müller Rosé," to set up a sharp contrast between appearance and reality: the brilliant, painted perfection of the performer on stage is contrasted with the grubby, ugly grotesqueness of the actor naked in his dressing room. From the model come such composition assignments as contrasting the exterior of a hotel with its interior, as checking the description of a motel in its advertising brochures against the plant itself, and as describing a girl "before she applies her make-up in the morning."[12] And in READINGS FOR COMPOSITION, the editors work from a description of Old Man Gant in Wolfe's LOOK HOMEWARD, ANGEL in asking students to choose some character's most striking characteristic--humility, arrogance, hypocrisy, etc.--as the basis for a character sketch.[13] A ninth grade student of mine, working from characters of Overbury and Earle, wrote:

> Take the status seeker. The status seeker is nice to everybody--everybody, that is, she finds it useful to be nice to. She does what seems to her socially desirable by being seen with the right people; she lends pencils only to her classmates who are members of the elite social group; to guarantee her own prominence she shuns the socially unacceptable as though they were the unwashed.

Before moving to pieces-of-poems as model, let me summarize some convictions both implicit and explicit in what I have said.

First, I am sure there are junior high teachers of imagination who go far beyond the lessons and suggestions in their texts and guides in their teaching of composition. Yet I would think it unwise to pretend that all teachers bring substantial innovation into their classrooms. The school texts and guides I have looked at offer a paucity of useful help.

Second, although the text survey reported here was neither so careful that I dare label the conclusions "definitive" nor so casual that I feel guilty of misrepresentation, it seems clear that models are largely ignored in junior high texts, only casually used in secondary texts, and are significantly used in most college rhetorics.

Third, I assume that a broad objective for the use of model might be to help students develop a sense of style, a sense of effective writing. This sense, however nebulous, might be what will allow the student to move toward independence from imitation. I am sure that too few users of models do enough with models that a student's sense of style will develop. Using models to teach composition demands more than providing something to write about. Teachers must somehow engage students in a close enough examination of successful writing that students learn from it ways of beginning, of proceeding, and of accomplishing a particular writing job. Teachers must take the time to show, question, and examine in every fruitful way how a writer accomplishes a particular success.

II. Using Images from Poems

The idea of using non-literal images from poems as a part of the getting-ready-to-write exercises for junior high students came out of the reading of hundreds of papers of students in grades 6-10 in the Niles Township system. The papers consisted of a "random sample" of 812 students. Each student wrote two themes: the first, an impromptu theme; the second, a "take-home" description theme. At one point in the work with the Niles sample, I read through 100 papers judged to be "good student writing" by the expert readers. Fifty of the papers were impromptu themes; fifty were the "take-home" description papers.

In an effort to describe and quantify the characteristics of "good" writing and "bad", expert readers worked toward and achieved substantial agreement about papers they characterized as "good student writing" and others they labeled "bad student writing." When asked to list the predominating characteristics of "bad student writing," they agreed that the bad writing was flat, lacking in vividness and detail. We translated "flatness" as related to--but not exclusively caused by--lack of imagery. In attempting to define imagery, we ended up with two general kinds: first, the literal imagery of the specific, concrete, and sensory detail; second, the non-literal imagery of metaphor or, more broadly, of figure.

In the impromptu papers I found one sample of figure I would judge to be original; one youngster created a simile that compared summer school with an electronically controlled kindergarten. In the fifty description themes, I found perhaps a dozen concrete details which seemed to me interesting, original, and specific. If my judgments of these "good" papers are fair, even they can be said to be characterized by a lack of imagery. The question is not whether young students can structure flights of fancy in science fiction tales or imaginative personal narrative. The issue is the lack of imagery within those structural frameworks.

Believing, then, that the student's inability to enliven his writing by use of concrete, specific images or by such non-literal images as metaphor, personification, and the like, we set out to find some models to put in front of students and make some plans for engaging students in considering those models.

Perhaps precipitously we concluded that the best place to find the best images would be in poetry. Indeed, as we talked, we thought we might first go to poetry for non-literal, figurative images and subsequently to prose for concrete, literal images. We theorized that the figurative images should come from poems meeting certain criteria: First, we wanted to take images from poems we judged to be good poems. Second, we thought that the images might best come from contemporary poems. (The rationalization here was that images drawn from the source pools tapped by contemporary writers might be more congenial to young students in the 1960's than the out-of-doors, natural images used so generously by poets of a century ago. Many of the images, we thought, should be urban and mechanical.)

Third, we felt that we had the obligation to provide students with complete poems once we had picked the imagistic plums from them. If we were going to make the complete poem available, should not that poem be susceptible to independent reading, "makable" by our proposed junior high school audience? We wanted images drawn from contemporary susceptible poems of high quality.

After establishing these criteria, criteria harder to meet than we anticipated, we turned to the finding of images. We first had to find images, next had to arrange the images somehow, and third had to devise ways to get junior high school students to consider them.

With these decisions made, I found two dozen poems that seemed to me to meet the criteria of contemporariness, quality, and susceptibility. A method for collecting images was needed; I tried these two dozen poems on different sets of willing image-cullers. Among those cullers were graduate students at Northwestern, poets, school teachers from both junior and senior high levels, and college professors of English. Even though I tried to explain what it was we were about and what we wanted, there was very little correspondence among the images the different cullers found in the poems. (In my judgment, the poets and the professors found too many images, the graduate students too few, and the teachers found the right numbers of images but were too seldom in agreement about which were appropriate.)*

Some hunches about image-culling came from informal try-outs with the following poem:

"The wind billowing out the seat of my britches . . ." to
"And everyone, everyone, pointing up and shouting!"

The complete model is taken from the poem "Child on Top of a Greenhouse" by Theodore Roethke.

The image in the first line seemed somehow abstruse to the youngsters asked to respond to it. They understood "wind" and "britches" and even "billowing," but the line didn't mean much despite these adequate lexical understandings. In the third line, the personified "chrysanthemums" required a rather considerable context in order to have the image make sense. Putting the third line in front of the youngster implied telling him that the child on top of the greenhouse had somehow raised hob with the windows. In formal try-outs it was suggested that this situation was not as clear as you might think it would be even when students had the entire poem in front of them. Certainly, then, the fine image might come from the next-to-last line--from the plunging, tossing, elms-become-horses. Again, experience with several classes of seventh graders hinted the melancholy fact that despite the wind billowing in Line 1 and the eastward ranging clouds in Line 5, not every youngster knew what the elm trees were doing--or better, why they were doing what they were doing. Apparently, to use the image, we'd have to explain it as the wind pushing the elm trees around.

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*See Appendix for the directions given to the cullers.

Short poems, such as the poem below, support Rule 5:

"A silver-scaled Dragon with jaws flaming red . . ." to
"He hands them back when he sees they are done."

The complete model is taken from the poem "The Toaster" by William Jay Smith.

Even though this poem seemed to meet the criteria for the kinds of poems we wanted to cull from, there was nothing that could be pic ked from it. It was either the whole poem, the complete metaphor, or nothing. The students might delight in this "Toaster" poem, but reading it might be too much of a good thing for our purposes. We weren't preparing a unit on poetry; we aimed only at putting sharp models in front of youngsters and at helping them see some of the possibilities of image.

Whether these are valid or invalid reactions is less relevant than the fact that the culling of images produced problems galore. Perhaps one of the major problems need not be confronted until some experimentation with the pieces-of-poems as models is accomplished. This particular problem deals with the question of copyright. According to editors in two text publishing houses in the Chicago area, the "fair use" interpretation of the copyright law applies only to prose, not to poetry.

Apparently, one can use perhaps fifty words from a Hemingway novel and incorporate that passage in an educational text, giving credit to the original publisher and copyright holder. Poetry, however, is a special case; taking even a four or five word image from a poem and making test use of that image carries the legal necessity of getting permission for--and perhaps paying for--each item. If the pieces-of-poems idea seems sound, there may be thousands of letters to be written and many expensive arrangements to be made. (One possible way out of the dilemma is to ask poets and others to create images expressly for the project. Some experience with this procedure hints that images come better from poems than from contracted "inspiration.")

Since our informants at the publishing house led us to believe that we might use images from poems for non-profit experimental purposes, we put the image-collecting machine to work. Teachers and poets read our rules and began submitting hundreds of images. Two hundred twenty-one images were selected from the hundreds that flowed in. The cards were photographed and printed. We have at Northwestern for experimental purposes twenty-one sets of cards. Reproduced on stiff cardboard, the image cards look like this:

dawn is a coarse young crow 80	The city swims in noise 65

The numerals on the cards are there so that the cards can be shuffled into different sets and then replaced in sequence; a careful record of poem, poet, and source corresponds with the numerals.

The second step in the images-from-poems adventure was to arrange the cards. Obviously, they could be arranged in almost countless ways. A poet, for example, took our deck of 221 image cards and placed them in sets depending on how each image related to others. A junior high school teacher arranged the cards in sets according to some private scheme for teaching composition. Students arranged the cards in the sets according to the subjects of the images.

One of our images reads: "The gull's wing kisses the whitecap." The poet who wrote this line, Robert Francis, put it into a set he called "Motion and Movement." Another poet put it into a set called "Animals and Birds." Another tossed it into "Water: lakes and ocean." A teacher called it "Personification."

A half-dozen of our twenty-one decks of cards have been arranged by various individuals. Once the deck has been arranged into various sets, each of the cards in a particular set carries on it the name of the set. See, for example, one card as it might appear in two different sets:

COLOR
Farm houses, bone-gray,
bleached-board gray
77

BUILDINGS
Farm houses, bone-gray,
bleached-board gray
77

Apparently, depending upon what the individual teacher thinks he might do with the cards pretty much determines how he will arrange them. The decks of cards already arranged into sets by poets and teachers are remarkable for their differences rather than their similarities. I think that these differences suggest a desirable flexibility in the possible uses of the cards.

III. Sample lesson plans

The actual lessons consist of three sets comprising twenty-two individual lessons. The first set, dealing with color, has five lessons; the second, dealing with motion, has seven lessons; the third set, dealing literal and non-literal images, has ten lessons.

First Draft 8-1-64

MOTION IN WRITING

LESSON #3

SPECIFIC AIM: to help students choose and use fresh descriptions of motion found in nature.

PROCEDURE: Write on board, "Weather predictions: Tonight, windy and cool; Thursday, partly sunny, chance of brief thunder-showers; Friday, partly cloudy."

[This is an actual weather forecast for a hot July day in the summer of 1964. If you prefer, take a report from the paper at the time the lesson is being taught and follow a procedure like that below.]

SAY: On the board I have written a weather forecast copied from a newspaper. It predicts the weather for a three-day period and seems to be specific. Newspapers usually get right to the point. They also want to be accurate.

ASK: From the weather report, you can see there are going to be "cool winds tonight." What three other things are mentioned?

SAMPLE REPLIES:

1. sun
2. rain
3. clouds

SAY: Look again at tonight's prediction--windy and cool. This seems to be an accurate description, but it's hard to picture the weather from the words used in this report. Something is lacking; some details are missing. We don't know how windy it will be or how cool.

SAY: If the report said there would be gentle winds or moderate winds or strong winds, it would be a more revealing forecast.

Can you think of some verbs to describe the movement of the wind? Think in terms of gentle, moderate or strong winds, and we'll mark them on this wind speed line.

PROCEDURE: Draw "wind speed" line on board and say: "A breeze is defined as between 7-38 mph; a gale is defined as between 25-75 mph.

```
0------5------10------15------20------25------30
murmurs  sighs  sings  whistles  sobs   rages
whispers puffs  cries  moans     growls screams
```

As sample responses are volunteered, write them beneath appropriate velocity.

Encourage and discuss responses. Point out connotations of gentle winds: "whisper" and "murmur"; and of gale force winds: "screams" and "rage."

SAY: Here are some ways poets have described the wind.

PROCEDURE: Write on board:

> "the wind bowls the day's litter of news in the alley"
>
> "the hand of the wind touches him"
>
> "in a fall wind, a monster lizard of leaves drags his tail and scuttles back and forth."

ASK: Which images tell of strong winds?

SAMPLE REPLIES:

1. the wind bowls
2. leaves scuttle

PROCEDURE: The verb "bowls" suggests the force of the bowling ball as it hurtles down the alley. The strength of the wind in the third image made the lizard of leaves scuttle back and forth. But the hand of a wind that "touches" seems a soft and gentle wind.

SAY: Tomorrow's weather prediction calls for partly sunny weather with possible thundershowers. Poets might describe things about the weather this way:

PROCEDURE: Write on board:

> "and there are puddles the sun is winking at"
>
> "when thunder growls and prowls"
>
> "lightning that falls bright-veined and clear"
>
> "a rainbow holds out its shining hands"

SAY: I have it on reliable authority that tomorrow:

PROCEDURE: [Write and say:]

The sun will shine, a thunderstorm will occur, and a rainbow will appear.

SAY: But "shine" and "occur" and "appear" aren't very interesting verbs. I want you to think of more colorful, more interesting verbs and then write a sentence--a poetic forecast--for the sunshine, a thundershower, and a rainbow. You'll have about five minutes and the sentences will be handed in.

SAMPLE REPLIES:

1. The sun will scorch, glare, dazzle, blaze, flash.
2. A thunderstorm will explode, rumble, roll, boom, crash.
3. A rainbow will glitter, dance, stretch, smile, hover.

PROCEDURE: Give personal comments and encouragement on sentences before returning to students.

SAY: The long-range prediction for Friday was "Partly cloudy."

ASK: Can you think of ways clouds move about and change? Think of some verbs to describe the movements of clouds.

SAMPLE REPLIES: foam, froth, scud, threaten, shadow, boil over, churn, billow

PROCEDURE: Encourage and discuss responses.

SAY: I'm going to begin a paragraph which I want you to complete. It may be as short or as long as you wish, but make it as lively and precise as you can.

PROCEDURE: Write on board:

> "White clouds chase each other in the shifting winds. Suddenly the game is over; the sky darkens and the clouds now seem to ____________"

Personal comments and encouragement before returning paragraphs.

IMAGE CARDS USED:

"The wind bowls . . . "	#56
"The hand of a wind . . . "	#169
"In a fall wind, a monster . . . "	#96
"And there were puddles . . . "	#91
"When thunder growls . . . "	#29
"Lightning that falls . . . "	#25
"A rainbow held out . . . "	#186
"White clouds chase each other . . . "	#204

Conclusion

Here are several possibilities for assignments:

1. Discuss with students the sense and feel of one season, as revealed in a variety of image cards, in getting them ready to write about the feel of another season. For example, discussing winter images before writing about summer might prove interesting.

2. Ask an entire class to write a particular descriptive-narrative scene. Then let half of the students go immediately about the writing of the scene, and ask the other half to deal with appropriate images before they write. Will the image-users create more lively prose?

3. A paired group experiment might provide an answer to the question of the value of using the image cards. I'd like to see a class divided into two paired groups. Both groups would have as assignments the writing of particular descriptions of expositions. One of the groups would make extensive use of the cards, the other would be forced to struggle along without them. Sets of image cards such as "Cities and Buildings" and "People and Motion" offer an example. Asking both groups of students to "describe two buildings that stand next to each other, one building old and the other one new." Would the image-users produce more vivid prose?

4. It might be interesting to project a series of fifteen or twenty related image cards on to a wall and ask the students to write from those images.

5. What kinds of uses of the image cards could students devise if given more time and some decks of unclassified cards to work from? There might be some interesting results coming out of the relatively simple process of asking youngsters to classify the cards into their

own sets.

6. Whole poems might be used advantageously to motivate and shape "creative writing."

One kind of poem that serves imitation well is the catalogue or "listing" poem. "How do I love thee?" asks Elizabeth Barrett Browning. "These have I loved," says Rupert Brooke in "The Great Lover." Fifteen-year-old Barbara Fainstein begins her own list of loved things:

> These have I loved: Warm rain, dripping over tiled roofs:
> Green frogs bellowing from lily pads;
> Pink peonies damp with cool dew-drops;
> Wet grass between my toes;
> Crinkly paper;
> Red ink . . . [14]

Philip Booth lists railroad cars in his poem, "Crossing"; Elizabeth Coatsworth's "Swift Things Are Beautiful" begins:

> Swift things are beautiful;
> Swallows and deer,
> Lightning that falls
> Bright-veined and clear . . .

Any student who can see this as a list of swift, beautiful things can make his own list. Adopting Coatsworth's first swift things, then slow things trick, he finds his own opposites: sweet/sour; rough/smooth; jazzy/cool; whatever. Once his list is down, he can rework it, polish, order it by some principle of space or time or feeling; he can make figures of his concrete things. Here is model, both as source and technique.

During a visit to the Euclid Demonstration Center, I saw demonstrations of the teaching of composition utilizing the forms of the haiku, the ballad, and the blues stanza. Student writing from these demonstrations, mimeographed and distributed at the conference, seemed to me impressive.

Personal experience with using literary models in the teaching of composition tells me they work. The better the models are chosen, the more particular the writing assignment, the more directly and thoughtfully the student is engaged in the consideration of the model, the better the results.

The models' quiver is pregnant with arrows. One arrow plunged deep into the neural-muscular target of kinesthesia: copy enough good writing often enough and it will become part of the nerves and muscles and brain. Another arrow simply zips past the prose of good writers: read enough of the good writers and some sense of style will accrue. Between such extremes of rote copying and an easy "Read this to see how E. B. White does it" are countless possibilities of model use. In fitting an arrow to the bow, you might ponder certain questions:

1. What particular and what general things might result from this use of model?

2. What chemistry of adolescence says that what is basic to the writing instruction of an eighteen-year-old college freshman is peripheral for the thirteen-year-old eighth grader?

3. Will models engender improvement in student writing? What models? How are they best used? Will some models work better with one kind of student than with another? Will some models interfere with--rather than promote--good student writing?

Stephen Dunning

FOOTNOTES

[1] Interview with George Hillocks, May 14, 1964. Note the articles by McCampbell and Dyess in English Writing: Approaches to Composition (a report on Conference VI). Reports available from Project English Demonstration Center, 152 Chardon Road, Cleveland, Ohio.

[2] Don M. Wolfe, "Grammar and Linguistics: A Contrast in Realities," The English Journal, 53 (February, 1964), 73-78f.

[3] William D. Baker, "The Natural Method of Language Teaching," The English Journal, 47 (April, 1958), 212-217.

[4] Stegner, et al., Modern Composition, Book 2 (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), pp. 47-50.

[5] Tressler, et al., Junior English in Action, Book 1, 7th edition; (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1960), pp. 75-76.

[6] Bryant, et al., English at Work, Course 1, revised edition; (New York, Scribner's, 1956), pp. 36-39.

[7] Brother H. Albert, et al., English Arts and Skills (New York: Macmillan, 1961).

[8] Corbin and Perrin, Guide to Modern English (Upper Years) (Chicago: Scott-Foresman, 1960), pp. 50-53.

[9] Walcutt, An Anatomy of Prose (New York: Macmillan, 1962), pp. 73-78.

[10] Lee and Moynihan, Using Prose (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1961), pp. 16-22.

[11] Kane and Peters, Writing Prose: Techniques and Purposes (New York: Oxford, 1959), pp. 78-82.

[12] McGehee and McCormick, Imagination and Intellect (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 325-331.

[13] Davidson and Glenn, Readings for Composition (New York: Scribner's, 1957), pp. 291-295.

[14] Barbara Fainstein, "These have I loved," in The Horn Book Magazine (August, 1962), p. 406.

APPENDIX

Instructions for Cullers

RULE 1.

A. Bibliography: On your worksheets put exact and full bibliographic data for every image. What you give me on the worksheets will be transferred onto index cards. (See, again, sample cards attached. Note the bibliographic information on back.)

B. Desirable detail: Write down everything that would help me locate and identify a poem were I to write the publisher for "permission to reprint."

C. Duplications on sources: If you are going through an anthology or an issue or volume of a magazine, cut down your writing chore by using ibid., or some clear comment such as "From same text as above" or "From same poem as above."

RULE 2.

Limit your image culling to the two kinds of images described in the "rationale": Literal images (sharp, interesting, rich, sensuous, concrete detail) and non-literal or figurative images (including metaphor, simile, and personification).

Here are some examples of literal images (concrete, sensuous details).

A. Thick pink slices of watermelon oozing watery juices . . .

B. hemlocks with moss-covered branches, low shrubs forming grotesque outlines in the moonlight

Here are some examples of non-literal images (figures of speech).

C. oaks spat acorns over scurries of squirrels (metaphor)

D. A line of elms plunging and tossing like horses (simile)

E. Chrysanthemums staring up like accusers (personification)

F. (the cars), like burnished beetles, leave muddy tracks behind them as they crawl (personification)

RULE 3.

Do not include any images that will not make some kind of "complete sense." This is both crucial and complicated. I'm not, of course, talking about "sentence completeness." Examples A and B above might be considered "imagistically" complete even though they are not grammatically complete.

How to handle completeness?

A. Be sure to give title of poem. Sometimes the title will make the image clear. For example:

From "The Fish by Elizabeth Bishop

his brown skin hung in strips like ancient wallpaper

B. Many time, more "context" will be needed to make the image clear. For example:

From "Summer Storm" by Wilmott Ragsdale

Bombing the porch rail, exploding white campfire fountains

To make this perfectly clear, I add in my own words this explanation:

[the rain is]
bombing the porch rail, exploding white campfire fountains

When I write the explanation, I put my words in brackets.

C. If an explanation can be taken from the poet's own words earlier in the poem, use the poet's words but put them in parentheses ( ) instead of brackets [ ]. For example:

From "Traffic" by M. E. Fraudi

(His car, his heap, his jalop . . .)
screams gravel-spattering turns around the asphalt bend

In example F under Rule 2, above, the image needs the completion of the words in parentheses. These words came from the poem. Perhaps the image would be even clearer were there something like this:

[viewing traffic from the top of a high building]
(the cars), like burnished beetles, leave muddy tracks behind them as they crawl

Example E in Rule 2, above, would probably be clearer or "completer" with something like this:

[Atop the greenhouse windows he has smashed, a boy sees . . .]
Chrysanthemums staring up like accusers

RULE 4.

Don't use any short image (three or four words) that requires eight or ten words of explanation from the poet or from you.

RULE 5.

Although 7th and 8th graders differ widely in what they can make sense of, remember 12- to 14-year-olds as you work! Select images you believe will be clear, interesting and original to *them*.

Images will run from "very easy" . . .

A. *The storm roaming the sky like a dog looking for a place to sleep*

and from "moderately easy" . . .

B. *the young wind runs like an eager hound*

to "moderately hard" . . .

C. *take dawn in your mind like a glass; feel it turn showing sparkle and shade*

to "perhaps-too-hard" . . .

D. *our ear's map of recollection*

or . . .

E. *the sun bobs and is snarled in the enclosing weir of trees*

I don't think many 7th and 8th graders would be able to "make" the "perhaps-too-hard" images D and E. Thus give me "very easy," "moderately easy" and "moderately hard" images rather than "perhaps-too-hard" images. What such loose headings as "moderately easy" mean I leave to you. (I'll make *my* guesses later on.)

Should you find an image that is too good to pass by but may seem too-hard because of a difficult work, include the image but asterisk and gloss the difficult word. To use example E above,

the sun bobs and is snarled in the enclosing weir* of trees

*(a net or fence)

RULE 6.

Present the image in the line pattern of the poem. For example:

violence of acetylene torches
blue-bright as stars, the brilliant rocket-rain of welders' arcs,

I'll need the images in lines *precisely as they come from the poem*

RULE 7.

Occasionally, you'll find a complete poem that makes a complete image. Cutting it into pieces would ruin it. For example:

"A silver-scaled Dragon with jaws flaming red . . ." to

"He hands then back when he sees they are done."

(source for this model is cited on p. 11 of this theoretical paper)

An arbitrary rule: Don't use any poem that runs more than four lines.

Most images, indeed, should be from three to eight words. Let's say that *fifteen* words is a seldom-to-be-exceeded word limit.

A. S. Dunning

QUESTIONS IN AID OF A MODERN SYSTEM OF INVENTION

Question:

Does the writer use adequate and appropriate details in the order and in the language necessary to create a unified, coherent, well-proportioned, and distinct total impression in the mind of the reader?

A. adequate - enough for clarity and completeness, but none that will overload or distort the image or distract the reader

B. appropriate - right for the intended image and within the experience of the reader

C. order - a sequence that presents the details as they are needed to build an accurate impression

D. language - a vocabulary that is familiar to the reader, that stimulates his imagination, and that enables him to comprehend quickly and precisely

E. unified - a single total impression based on a limited concept

F. coherent - related systematically according to a well-considered plan

G. well-proportioned - chosen to give an impression that is in focus with each aspect receiving enough, but not too much, attention

H. distinct - sharply outlined so that the reader will not be left with a vague, uncertain impression

I. total impression - a satisfying understanding of the concept the writer has sought to convey

If the total impression is not only clear and complete but also interesting and stimulating, so much the better. The level of writing details can vary from the confused and inadequate to the highly imaginative and provocative treatment that is most rewarding to writer and reader.

Analysis of details:

1. Is the concept abstract or concrete?
2. If concrete, is it as concrete as possible?
3. Is the concept general or specific?
4. If specific, is it as specific as possible?
5. Is the language of specificity superficial or analytical, casual or discriminating?
6. Is the language of specificity literal or imaginative?
7. Does the language of specificity express a value judgment?
8. Does the language of specificity express a comparison or a contrast?
9. Does the language of specificity show a prejudice based on previous experience?
10. Does the language of specificity differentiate in class, kind, degree, size, or other categories?
11. Does the language of specificity represent a complete or a partial comprehension of the idea?
12. Does the language of specificity show a distortion of the idea?
13. Does the language of specificity show a confusion of ideas or the substitution of one idea for another?
14. Does the language of specificity overload the concept with unnecessary or distracting details?
15. Does the language of specificity make consistent use of detail on the same level throughout the composition?
16. Do the specific details create a pattern that makes a clear and coherent total impression?
17. Do the specific details present the concept in sharp, precise outlines that enable the reader to visualize or to make other sensory responses accurately?
18. Do the specific details present an excess of items that inhibit the imagination of the reader?
19. Are the details set forth in the right proportion and in the right relationship to give the reader a well-ordered and accurate concept?
20. Will the details presented enable the reader to create from his experience a total impression close to the impression the writer is endeavoring to develop?

21. Will the details require inferences by the reader with which he would not agree?

22. Will the details arouse avoidable emotional responses unrelated to the essential character of the concept?

23. Will the details assume experiences that are so novel and unusual that they will be beyond the imagination of the reader?

24. Will the details have a limited appeal or usefulness, being related to the experiences of one sex, one age group, one professional group?

25. Will the language of the details present a special jargon unfamiliar to the reader, e.g., the special jargon of teenagers or the technical terms of the scientist?

26. Are the details limited to one aspect of a concept, such as form, when another aspect, such as color, may be equally or more important?

27. Do the details presented depend upon a background of reading which can be depended upon as familiar to the reader?

28. Does the writer rely on one means of presenting details, such as colorful adjectives, when he should be using others, such as active verbs?

29. Does the writer distribute his details effectively to enable the reader to develop the concept step by step?

30. Does the writer present his details in the right order so that the reader does not have to correct an impression formed because an essential detail was missing in a particular sequence?

31. Do the details represent allusions to persons, places, events, or ideas that the reader can be expected to identify?

32. Do the details depend upon special knowledge, such as history, psychology, philosophy, sociology, or political science, that the reader can be expected to have acquired?

33. Do the details assume standards of taste, morality, etiquette, and the like that are subject to personal preference?

34. Do the details show a pattern of analysis, depending upon such patterns as time-order, space-order, degree of importance, likenesses and differences?

35. Do the details define, enumerate, categorize, describe, narrate, illustrate, exemplify, negate, identify, differentiate to create the required impression?

36. Do the details adequately support the thesis the writer seeks to maintain?

37. Are the details subjective or objective?

38. Are subjective details appropriate or inappropriate?

39. Are objective details needed?

40. Can the writer know that his details are objective?

Professor Wilbur E. Gilman
July 25, 1963

Question:

Does the writer use relevant and valid supporting information and evidence in logical sequence to justify the reasoning, expressed in language that is exact, direct, and forceful?

A. relevant -- pertinent to the specific proposition to be developed with convincing proof

B. valid -- acceptable on the basis of tests of authority, completeness, experience, recency, lack of negative instances, general applicability, controlled experimentation

C. supporting -- answering the question "why" with reference to the statement

D. information -- factual knowledge derived from experience

E. evidence -- testimony from experts and laymen, results of polls, answers from questionnaires, recorded events and activities, inquiry and investigation

F. logical sequence -- arrangement from specific to general, general to specific, cause to effect, effect to cause, analogical comparison and contrast, residues

G. justify -- persuade the reader of the soundness of the proposal so that he is willing to accept it as being in accord with judgment and feeling

H. reasoning -- inferences inductively or deductively constructed

I. exact language -- each word carefully chosen for precise meaning

J. direct language -- sentences that proceed concisely and cogently from one idea to another in immediately understandable terms adapted to the reader

K. forceful language -- composition that leaves no doubt about the position being maintained or the gx ground on which it is established

Professor Wilbur E. Gilman
July 26, 1963

Analysis of support for opinion:

1. Is the position taken made clear, concise, and definite either directly or by implication?

2. Is there a declaration amounting to a proposition or is a question to be answered set forth, or would one improve the presentation?

3. Is the position taken presented in unbiased language or is it loaded with assumptions that should be the concern of part of the proof?

4. Is the opinion introduced with a background of information needed for a full understanding of the argument?

5. Are terms defined or in need of definition?

6. Is the scope of the argument specifically limited or should it be further limited?

7. Are concessions made or are they advantageous for a well-focused attack on the argument?

8. Are there issues or essential questions for which the argument provides contentions developed with affirmative answers?

9. Is the argument divided into two or more major contentions, each adequately stated?

10. Is each major division systematically subdivided into reasons that tell why the contention should be accepted?

11. Is the reasoning developed, wholly or partially, from examples to generalization, and, if so, does this method seem appropriate for the subject and the reader?

12. If generalizations are used, are they based on enough examples for a valid inference?

13. Are the examples typical or representative?

14. Are the examples of the kind needed for the argument?

15. Have negative examples been considered, and, if so, can they be dismissed as in some way irrelevant, unimportant, or of insufficient consequence to modify the inference?

16. Are the examples set forth in complete enough detail to be fully understood?

17. Are the examples well-chosen in relation to the experience of the reader?

18. Are the examples first-hand from the experience of the writer or second-hand from other sources, and, if so, are the sources reliable?

19. Is the reasoning developed, wholly or partially, deductively from statement to particulars?

20. Do the particulars relate directly to the statement?

21. Have the *non sequitur* fallacies, such as *post hoc ergo propter hoc*, been avoided?

22. Have shifts in the meanings of words been avoided?

23. Is the reasoning consistent with itself?

24. Are major and minor premises clear and logically related?

25. Is assertion substituted for proof?

26. Are appeals to interests, motives, feelings, beliefs, and habits clearly identified with the reasoning?

27. Does the writer offer himself as an authority, or does he rely on the authority of others?

28. If authorities are used, are they shown to be qualified on the subject?

29. Are the authorities experts or laymen?

30. Are the authorities known to the reader, and, if not, does the writer identify them and justify their use?

31. Is the testimony of authorities quoted or paraphrased, and, if paraphrased, is it trustworthy?

32. Are the authorities used recent enough to be appropriate?

33. Are the authorities objective and free from personal interest in the outcome?

34. Are the authorities the best ones available to the writer?

35. Does the writer rely too heavily on one authority?

36. Does the writer use~~d~~ analogies?

37. Are the analogies figurative or literal?

38. If the analogies are figurative, are they useful or misleading?

39. If the analogies are literal, are they based on essential aspects?

40. Are cause and effect arguments used?

41. Are the causes sufficient to produce the effects?

42. Are the causes shown to be fully related to the effects?

43. Are other causes overlooked?

44. Should other effects be considered?

45. Are hypothetical arguments used?

46. Are the rules concerning antecedents and consequents observed?

47. Are disjunctive arguments used?

48. Are the alternatives complete?

49. Is a dilemma offered?

50. Is the supporting evidence for the arguments used direct or circumstantial?

51. Is the evidence hear-say or original?

52. Is negative evidence considered?

53. Is refutation of the arguments of others presented?

54. Is the refutation based on counter-arguments more convincing than the arguments attacked?

55. Is the refutation based on showing fallacies in reasoning?

56. Does the refutation attack basic assumptions?

57. Does the refutation attack the validity of the evidence offered?

58. Does the refutation show errors in the use of terms?

59. Does the refutation depend upon special devices, such as reduction to an absurdity?

60. Is the conclusion consistent with the argument and the evidence?

61. Does the conclusion reënforce the position taken at the outset?

62. Does the conclusion appeal to the reader for agreement with the writer?

63. Does the conclusion minimize the position taken by those holding opposing views and play up the soundness of the position taken by the writer?

64. Does the composition as a whole make a consistent adequately supported, clearly-reasoned case?

65. Has the writer used psychological appeals as well as logical reasoning?

66. Are the appeals well adapted to the reader?

67. Does the writer take advantage of common ground of interests, feelings, beliefs, and patterns of action in setting forth his opinion for the reader to accept?

68. Does the writer establish his personal proof by showing in his writing sincerity, forthrightness, good judgment, and other characteristics that will enhance his status with the reader?

69. Does the style of presentation indicate a systematic, well-considered, fully developed justification of an opinion?

70. Is the language in every way appropriate for a clear and cogent argument?

TOPICS FOR CONSIDERATION IN LESSONS

I. Oral Discussion

- A. Preparation
    1. Division of the problem
    2. Investigation through observation and reading
    3. Organization of notes
- B. Participation
    1. Contributions of background information
    2. Proposed solution with reasons
    3. Cross-questioning and comments
- C. Applications to Writing
    1. Summary of the discussion
    2. Reactions to the discussion
    3. Development of individual thinking on problem

II. A Prepared Speech

- A. Assignment
    1. One or more articles to be analyzed
    2. Systematic reactions to the articles
    3. Construction of a speech of commentary or refutation with good support
- B. Presentation of Speech
    1. Speech adapted in content and delivery to class audience on one aspect of a general topic
    2. Opportunity after each speech for class to comment on both content and presentation
- C. Applications to Writing
    1. Summary of ideas presented in speeches
    2. Reaction to a major idea presented
    3. Development of a related idea provoked by the series of speeches

III. Tape Recording or Disc Recording

- A. Discussion or Speeches on a General Topic
    1. Playbacks for analysis and comments in class
    2. Assignment for writing to evaluate or to develop one aspect brought out in the analysis
- B. A Reading: Excerpt from Literature or Current Article
    1. Playbacks for analysis and comments in class
    2. Assignment for writing to summarize in student's own words or to evaluate the work or to develop an idea related to it

C. Testimony or Personal Experience

  1. Playbacks for comment
  2. Assignment for writing to present a similar or related experience

D. Speeches on Individually-chosen Topics

  1. Playbacks for student's analysis of his speech
  2. Assignment for writing to develop the same topic more effectively for readers
  3. Assignment to differentiate the characteristics of good oral style from those of good written style

IV. Visual Aids

A. Charts, Photographs, and Samples

  1. Use in demonstrations for clarity
  2. Assignment for writing to describe and explain demonstration

B. Film Strips or Closed Circuit Television

  1. Presentation of a topic on film or television
  2. Assignment for writing to comment, to refute, to evaluate, or to develop one aspect or a related idea

C. Paintings, Prints, and Cartoons

  1. Presentation for analysis and appreciation
  2. Assignment for writing to comment, to evaluate, or to develop a related topic

V. Applications of Principles of Rhetoric

A. Inventio or Analysis

  1. Consideration of the subject for writing in divisions and subdivisions
  2. Finding material

     a. Personal experience previously acquired
     b. Direct observation of objects, operations, organizations, processes, conditions, or whatever pertains to the immediate topic to be treated
     c. Interviews and conversations with experts and laymen, including opinion polls
     d. Listening to recordings and radio programs, viewing films and television programs, attending lectures and other public programs, and visiting museums and displays
     e. Reading in books, periodicals, and newspapers

  3. Consideration of the needs of the reader
  4. Selecting evidence and kinds of argument
  5. Choosing examples and illustrations
  6. Determining need for authorities and deciding on appropriate testimony
  7. Estimating the need for refutation, the ideas to be refuted, and kinds of refutation to be used

B. Dispositio or Adaptation

1. Planning the structure of the composition
2. Determining the best sequence for the ideas, logical and psychological
3. Selecting means of gaining attention in the introduction
4. Applying means of sustaining attention in the body
5. Making the conclusion serve the purpose of giving the right total impression
6. Choosing appropriate appeals to the experience, the beliefs, the interests, the motives, the habits, and the desires of the readers
7. Deciding on appropriate ways of stimulating the feelings and emotions of the readers
8. Introducing ways of activating the imagination of the readers

C. Elocutio or Language

1. Using a vocabulary suited to the writer in relation to the reader
2. Developing a balanced structure and climaxes
3. Gaining vigor in style through meaningful nouns, colorful adjectives, and strong verbs

VI. Differentiation Between Writing and Speaking

A. Common Characteristics

1. Unity
2. Coherence
3. Emphasis
4. Propriety

B. Particular Characteristics of Oral Style

1. Instant intelligibility to enable listener to comprehend complete meaning as the speaker talks
    - a. Vocabulary within experience of listener
    - b. Sentence structure permitting listener to understand a unit of thought without the need for analysis or reflection: in general simple or compound periodic sentences rather than complex loose sentences
    - c. Devices of style that focus and economize the attention of the listener
        - (I). Parallel structure and repeated formulas
        - (II). Comparison of the unknown to the familiar, the complex to the simple
        - (III). Contrast to bring out likenesses and differences
        - (IV). Series rising to climax
        - (V). Meaningful repetition, e.g. restatement in different words suggesting another aspect
        - (VI). Transitions that recall what has been said and prepare for what is yet to be said
        - (VII). Metaphors that produce immediate and striking images
        - (VIII). Examples that make abstract and general ideas concrete and specific
        - (IX). Audience questions that challenge a response
        - (X). Imperatives that command attention

- (XI). Hortatory expressions that solicit attention
- (XII). Language that provides interest and appeal: unusual nouns, strong verbs, colorful adjectives

2. Personality

- a. Direct address referring to the audience at appropriate intervals, e.g. "my fellow citizens"
- b. Use of first and second personal pronouns rather than third personal pronouns
- c. Active rather than passive voice
- d. Reference to common ground: what speaker and audience share with each other

  - (I). Experience
  - (II). Information
  - (III). Interests
  - (IV). Feelings
  - (V). Beliefs
  - (VI). Patterns of action or habits

- e. Recognition of special interests of the particular audience depending upon the immediate circumstances

  - (I). Age
  - (II). Sex
  - (III). Race
  - (IV). Nationality
  - (V). Region
  - (VI). Community
  - (VII). Occupation
  - (VIII). Economic status
  - (IX). Social position
  - (X). Religion
  - (XI). Political belief
  - (XII). Intelligence
  - (XIII). Education
  - (XIV). Opinions
  - (XV). Attitudes
  - (XVI). Desires
  - (XVII). Motivations
  - (XVIII). Tensions

3. Informality

- a. Easy style appropriate to the kind of audience and the mood of the occasion
- b. Freedom from stiffness, tension, pedantry, and pomposity
- c. Language calculated to eliminate any suggestion of condescension
- d. Metaphorical expressions in common use when suited to the audience

4. Communicativeness

    a. Language indicating desire to be understood, e.g. "Have I made myself clear?"
    b. Expressions to recapture wandering attention, e.g. "Let us review what we have covered."
    c. Challenging questions, e.g. "Do we really believe that this scheme will get results?"
    d. Conversational quality, e.g. "Yes, I think we must undertake this task immediately."

C. Assignment

1. Written paper expressing a well-supported opinion on a topic of general interest, e.g. "Junior College for All Students"
2. Discussion of the topic as an inquiry: "Are there important advantages and disadvantages of extending education for all students through the junior college?" Six students could be asked to organize a symposium with another student as leader, each of the six to deal with an aspect of the question, e.g. (a) "A solution for unemployment of young people?" (b) "An answer to juvenile delinquency?" (c) "A help to the high school program?" (d) "A means of raising standards in senior colleges?" (e) "A help to the country in providing needed technicians in a technical program and better-prepared students for specialization in senior colleges?"
3. Program of speeches illustrating characteristics of good oral style, using the same topics more specifically developed, followed by a critique on the use of language for direct communication with a specific audience.

SUPPLEMENTARY ORAL EXERCISES ON OBSERVATION AND DESCRIPTION

Note: These divisions correspond to those used for "Topics for Consideration in Lessons."

I. Discussion Assignment

A. Divide the class into five discussion groups with a student leader for each group.
B. Ask each group to take one of the five senses so that all five will be considered in separate discussions.
C. Direct each group in turn to consider all of the aspects of the particular sense assigned to it with reference to previous assignments and to collect illustrative descriptive sentences, with each pupil dealing with one type of illustration, e.g. sight -- shape or design.
D. Allow student leader to introduce the discussion in a class hour by reviewing what has been said about observations of the particular sense at other class meetings and to call on each participant to make his contribution about an aspect of the sense being considered, with two or three of his descriptive sentences.
E. After all participants have made their contributions, ask student leader to summarize the types of illustration presented and to call for comments first from the participants and then from the class audience.
F. Conduct critique to evaluate the illustrations and to consider how they can be applied to a writing assignment to follow.

II. Prepared Speech Assignment

A. Have students analyze particular passages of description for specific items.
B. Have each student present a brief but well-organized speech on a very specific aspect of observation, based on one kind of sensory perception and supported by a carefully chosen descriptive passage to illustrate.
C. Conduct a critique on the speeches to consider how well they communicated to the class audience the sensory impression intended.
D. Follow up with a writing assignment, applying the techniques brought out by the speeches and the critique.

III. Use of Tape or Disc Recording

A. Have students read selected descriptive passages, making a recording on tape or disc.
B. Play back recording, stopping it when necessary, for analytical comment and suggestions.
C. Follow up with a writing assignment applying suggestions based on the analysis of the recordings.

IV. Visual Aids as Basis for Description

A. Using charts, photographs, samples, paintings, prints, or cartoons, have each student describe as vividly and completely as possible what he observes, and what associations he makes with his observations, for the class audience.

B. Conduct a critique on the descriptions to consider how well they communicated clear and vivid impressions to the listeners.
C. Follow up with a writing assignment applying principles of clear and vivid description.

V. Applications of Principles of Rhetoric

A. Analysis

1. Have each student take a personal experience that stands out clearly in his mind.
2. Have him analyze the experience to determine the best way of presenting it for others to appreciate it, e.g. time order, space order, comparison and contrast.
3. Have him develop the account with the needs of the audience in mind, e.g. imagery that otherx students can identify from their experience.
4. Have him consider the amount and kind of details needed for clarity and vividness.
5. Have him consider the words, e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives, that will create the strongest possible impression in the minds of the listeners.
6. Have him consider the use of such stylistic devices as periodic sentences, parallelism, contrast, climax, restatement with added meaning, transitions that recall previous imagery and introduce new imagery, metaphors and other particular figures that will add color and depth, concrete and specific examples, possible use of questions, imperatives, and other challenging language.

B. Presentation

1. Have experéences presented with following criteria of good delivery in mind:
   a. Full realization of the complete meaning of each aspect as it is presented: recreation of the experience for the audience
   b. Direct communication, with speaker looking at all members of the audience as much as possible and with the desire to be fully understood.
   c. Sequence of ideas easy for the audience to follow, organized according to previously chosen plan
   d. Details and imagery that are related to the experience of the audience clearly and vividly presented
   e. Language that applies the principles of good oral style: instant intelligibility, personality, informality, and communicativeness
2. Conduct critique on the effectiveness of the presentations of personal experiences, with suggestions for improvement.

C. Writing

1. Have students discuss how written presentation ought to differ or may differ from the oral presentation.
2. Have students retell their experiences in writing.
3. Conduct critique of written experiences in comparison with oral presentations.

GENERAL APPLICABILITY OF PROCEDURES SUGGESTED IN I - V

The same assignments can be applied to the units on the general and the specific, the unit on structure, the unit on contrast, the unit on attitudes, the unit on viewpoints, the unit on emotion, the unit on humor, the unit on action, the unit on characterization, and the unit on implication.

SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPING OR MODIFYING LESSONS

p. 9 Would a structured discussion be useful, e.g. assigning particular students specific responsibilities in the discussion: A and B to bring out use of visual imagery; C and D, auditory imagery, etc.? After the panel has reported, the rest of the class should raise questions, supplement the observations, and make comments.

p. 25 Another structured discussion would be possible in this assignment.

p. 57 Again a structured discussion would be possible.

Another possible assignment would be:

Have four or five pupils present personal experience to the class audience. Follow with discussion of the means used to make the experience clear and interesting to the listeners. Have five or six students assigned to be participants in the discussion and one student to be the leader. Follow the discussion with class participation and a critique.

This assignment could be repeated, if desired, to enable all students to give a personal experience to the class audience, with whatever variety in requirements would lend interest to the class hours.

p. 76 The plan for use of personal experiences could be applied to humorous incidents in the same way as indicated for p. 57.

p. 100 Pupils could be asked to read aloud particular selections for the class to discuss in way described on p. 57. Five or six or more pupils could be given this assignment for a particular class hour. The selections could be assigned by the teacher or chosen by the pupils from a given list. Criteria for good communicative reading should be set up, e.g.

1. Complete understanding of the meaning at the moment of reading.
2. Volume and rate adopted to needs of listeners
3. Appropriate use of pauses for clarity and emphasis
4. Vocal variety to bring out fully relationship of the units of meaning
5. Eye contact with the audience: looking up from the text as much as possible to communicate the meaning directly

107 Assignment might be based on a demonstration by pupils with the use of visual aids. Each pupil could be asked to describe and explain a process using visual materials to illustrate. Six or seven could be heard each class hour. A class discussion could be arranged on the denomstrations of a given hour or on the program as a whole. The procedure suggested for p. 57 could be used.

Wilbur E. Gilman

ON USAGE AND THE TEACHING OF COMPOSITION

The study of usage presents problems of definition, approach, and selection. The problem of definition exists because many commentators on language fail to distinguish between grammar and usage. Objective analysis of what is, is often confused with subjective statements of what ought to be. The first goal then for the teacher should be to clarify for himself what he means by *usage*.

A great deal of material is presently available that will help the teacher understand the distinctions between grammar and usage. Rather than take time in this report to reiterate what has been clearly stated by experts in the field, we instead recommend that the teacher read James B. McMillan's "A Philosophy of Language," Archibald A. Hill's "Prescriptivism and Linguistics in English Teaching," and John S. Kenyon's "Cultural Levels and Functional Varieties of English" all in Harold Allen's *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, or Bergen and Cornelia Evans' Preface to *A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage*, or Eric P. Hamp's "Language in a Few Words: With Notes on a Rereading" in John P. DeCecco's *The Psychology of Language, Thought, and Instruction*.

After the teacher has defined usage, he then must decide what his approach for teaching it will be and what items are worthwhile teaching. Hopefully, he will present usage as a social phenomenon. He should inform students that the language they use is one means by which others will judge them. He should not over-emphasize this fact, but should search with students for realistic situations in which a particular usage item has both a positive and negative effect. He should be sure to make students aware that the situation, the audience, and the intent of the speaker all affect the kind of language chosen at any given time. He should also help students discover that the more flexible a speaker of a language is the better chance he has of controlling situations rather than being controlled by them. This does not mean that one level of usage is better than another, but that one level is better than another in a given situation, because of the expectations of people. Examples of how people react to various kinds of language and how both standard and colloquial language can operate detrimentally and positively are readily available in the works of Shakespeare, and Mark Twain, the daily newspapers, etc. The point of all such study should be to make the student sensitive to the social implications of language. The final choice of what usage to use, if the student has been taught a variety of usage items, will rest finally with him.

In selecting usage items to teach in the classroom, the teacher should be sure that the distinctions he is making are truly worthwhile. To waste a student's time with such untenable distinctions as _who_ and _whom_, or _shall_ and _will_ is unrealistic, because such an approach does not cope with the real problems. The teacher should be sure that the items taught do make a difference. Such items are best gathered from the occasional non-standard speech of students and can easily be balanced by standard usage items found in such a work as Evans' _A Dictionary of Contemporary American Usage_.

Michael Flanigan

A Guide to the
Evaluation of Descriptive Essays

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1966

A Guide to the Evaluation of Descriptive Essays

During the past few years, English teachers have, on the whole, begun to realize that rigorous correction of errors, generally errors in the use of "standard" English, is a less than satisfactory way of grading student essays. In a recent issue of the English Journal, Lois Arnold has demonstrated fairly convincingly that frequent writing, along with careful marking of errors by the teacher and subsequent revision by students, doesn't teach composition any more successfully than simply having students read widely and write occasional themes.[1] In the same issue of English Journal, Ralph Blackman suggests that an important weakness in the error correction method is its bad psychological effects on students who turn in carefully prepared papers only to have them returned covered with negative criticism.[2] Perhaps the most important point has been made by William G. Perry, Jr., who feels that the teacher who relies on error grading reverses the normal teaching process by inviting students to make errors rather than teaching them how to write good prose in the first place.[3]

In the Northwestern lessons, too, we have emphasized that the correction of wayward usage habits should not be confused with the teaching of composition; that teaching a student to write error free prose is not the same thing as teaching him to write good prose (even though many of the public protests concerning the quality of public school graduates' writing emphasize only correctness).

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[1] Lois V. Arnold, "Writer's Cramp and Eyestrain--Are They Paying Off?," English Journal, LIII (January, 1964), 31-33.

[2] Ralph Blackman, "Accentuate the Positive and Save the Red Pencil," English Journal, LIII (January, 1964), 10-15.

[3] William G. Perry, Jr., "The 600-Word Theme and Human Dignity," College English, XIV (May, 1954), 454-460.

But if a teacher discards the now-infamous red pencil and avoids using student papers as tools in correcting "lazy" or "ignorant" usage habits, he is faced with the problem of finding alternate methods of evaluation. How is he to assign grades to papers (particularly since the principal insists that he have at least six grades in his records for every marking period)? And more important, how can he evaluate so that he actually helps the student become a better writer?

One solution is for the teacher, who presumably can recognize good writing when he sees it, to supply a grade based on the content and expression of the paper without any regard for grammatical correctness. The teacher thus functions as a touchstone for the students, telling them whether or not their organization, ideas, and expression are good or bad. The student may receive papers with comments like the following: "An interesting idea, John, presented clearly and concisely. I do however, have some difficulty in following your ideas in paragraph three. Can you rewrite the paragraph to make your idea clearer?"

While such comments are clearly an improvement over red-pencilled usage blunders, they do not point the way for the student to become a better writer. How was John to know that paragraph three wasn't clear? Was he aware of the fact that he was writing clearly and concisely elsewhere? Will he be able to write concisely on his next essay because the teacher told him he did so on this one? Does the fact that the teacher finds his ideas interesting help him recognize the qualities of a good idea? The ability of the teacher to recognize well-written prose is not in question here. The weakness of the touchstone method is that the secret of good writing remains with the teacher; the student can only discover it by trial and error.

In contrast, it is possible to grade compositions with almost total objectivity, telling the student exactly what is right and wrong with his writing. If we can discover the characteristics of writing that is universally accepted as "good," we can apply objective criteria to student papers. This was the purpose of a recent study conducted at the University of Connecticut. In that project, a number of English professors gave subjective grades to a set of student themes. A computer was trained to "read" the essays and to make counts of a variety of linguistic structures like adverbial clauses, prepositional phrases, noun clauses, and infinitive phrases, which the investigators felt might be indexes of writing maturity. The various frequency counts were correlated with the professors' grades and the computer "learned" how to place grades on the papers simply by counting the various numbers and kinds of linguistic structures and applying a formula. The computer did well; in a subsequent test, the grades which it supplied a set of papers were indistinguishable from those of the professors.[4]

The system is far from foolproof and does, ultimately, depend on the ability of the professors to recognize good writing. But the experiment clearly shows that by knowing the signs of good writing, the teacher can grade objectively, making frequency counts and applying the formula to arrive at a grade. Students can be given concrete instructions for improving their writing: Alex uses too many prepositional phrases and not enough subordinate clauses; Sam doesn't write enough long sentences. Whatever "enough" means in each case. The system removes a good deal of the mystery from grading; for the student will know exactly what he must do to improve his work.

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[4] Arthur Daigon, "Computer Grading of English Composition," English Journal, LV (January, 1966), 46-52.

But the loss of the human element in the grading process is disastrous. The student must know not only that he needs more subordinate clauses, but _why_ he needs them and _why_ they will improve his writing, something that "pure" statistics cannot tell him. The computer method locates the signs, or objective correlates of good writing, but only a teacher, with his knowledge of good writing, can explain to the student why certain techniques or structures contribute to the effectiveness of an essay. Further, the computer can work with grammatical structures only; it cannot distinguish well and poorly organized papers and cannot separate clear from muddy writing.

These two examples summarize the dilemma of the English teacher faced with a set of papers for grading. Clearly, the teacher ought to avoid making subjective pronouncements about the student's work and should try to show him how he can improve his writing. But while the teacher must talk in specific terms about the linguistic and structural characteristics of the papers, he cannot simply tell a student to change his writing habits without explaining why.

In the following pages we will sketch out a method for grading papers which seems to provide a more or less satisfactory solution to the dilemma. The procedure is designed for grading descriptive papers like those produced from exercises in the Northwestern lessons and suggests the kinds of things a teacher may want to say about the papers his students submit.

Five student essays will be analyzed to show the scheme in operation.

For the paper, students were asked to describe a set of objects on the teacher's desk, using enough details that a person who had never seen the display could construct one exactly like it. Such an assignment does not lend itself to what we generally consider "imaginative" composition, but it does require the student to display his skill in a number of fundamental processes in descriptive writing, so that the grading scheme can easily be adapted to other writing assignments based on the Northwestern lessons.

In order to avoid vague, "wholistic" evaluation (i.e. a single grade covering such diverse items as content, form, sentence construction, and the like) we broke the grading into five separate categories.[5] These deal with such matters as organization, use of various kinds of detail, and sentence structure. We then surveyed a dozen or so papers to discover the observable characteristics which good and bad papers had. What were the signs of a well organized paper? Why did papers with bad organization seem bad? What kinds of details were used in good papers? What were the characteristics of good sentences?

When we had located and described these characteristics, we graded the entire set of papers: In each category a score of 5 was high; 1 low. (Obviously letter grades or a 100 point scale, or any other system of point distribution could have been used.) A paper possessing the "desired" characteristic was graded 5; a "1" signified that the characteristic was completely lacking. It is important to note that the scores were not relative ones, that is, were not based on how well the paper compared with others in the lot. Rather, grades were given on the basis of whether or not the desired characteristic was present or not. It is hardly a compliment to Susie to give her a "5" simply because her paper is better than Martha's. Rather, both Susie and Martha should be given grades based on whether or not their writing measures up to the standards of good writing.

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[5] The notion of breaking the grading into a number of parts is not new. See, for example, the NCTE pamphlet A Guide for Evaluating Student Composition (Champaign, 1965), where a number of writers suggest this approach.

Description of Categories - Evaluation of Sample Essays[6]

Category 1: Organization and Structure.

A good many students reacted to this assignment by composing what amounted to a descriptive catalogue, a list of objects, rather than anything resembling an "essay," or a coherent descriptive piece. Thus a surprisingly large number of essays simply began with a description of one object, and continued describing objects until the list was complete. More mature writers tried to bring some coherence into the topic as a whole, perhaps through introductory statements, in which they reviewed the purpose of the essay, or by characterizing the display as a whole. This category assesses the student's success at bringing some sense of unity into the paper.

Essay #5 is perhaps the most successful of the sample papers in this respect. The writer opens by describing (briefly) the general characteristics of the display; after the first 3 sentences we know there are 6 objects, arranged in a semi-circle in front of a dictionary, which stands upright. The author then methodically works from left to right around the semi-circle describing the objects (sentences 4-12). In paragraph II, having described the physical characteristics of the objects, the writer works around the semi-circle once again, this time describing the precise locations of the objects. The paragraphing is more than a visual decoration; the break in "print" marks a logical shift in thought. The writer has thus done a pretty competent job of imposing a logical, unifying order or structure on the essay. (Score 4.)[7]

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[6] Student essays discussed in this section are bound separately.

In sample paper #1, the student makes an initial attempt to bring some unity and structure to the essay, but ultimately fails and the essay becomes a catalogue. He sketchily describes the nature of the display (it contains five objects), and it becomes apparent at the end of the essay that he has been working from the wallet "on the left side" to the paper "in the upper right hand corner." But between those two items any semblance of natural order disappears; the writer simply lists objects, i.e. "next there is . . . a pack of gum," "Then there is a dark blue pencil." (Score 2.)

Essay #2 is somewhat more successful. Paragraph one characterizes the objects on the desk; paragraph two, the locations of the objects. Paragraph three describes the general layout of the objects, apparently as an afterthought, in an attempt to structure the essay. (Score 3.)

Essay #3 almost totally lacks structure or unity. The author does begin in the middle of the desk and works toward the edges, but makes virtually no attempt to bring unity into the collection. (Score 1.)

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[7] Obviously there is room for disagreement in the assignment of scores. Those reported here are the author's own estimates and therefore subject to his own biases. Other graders might easily find the paper worth, say, a 3 or a 5. It does not seem likely, however, that anyone would grade the paper as low as a 2 or a 1.

Paper #4, like #2, begins with an attempt to characterize the array as a whole: "On the desk in the front of the room are 6 objects." But the essay quickly degenerates into a catalogue of objects, characteristics, and locations. Note, for example, the ending of the essay; having exhausted the list of objects, the student simply stops writing. (Score 2.)

Category 2: "Locational" details.

Another difficult problem for the writers of this assignment was describing the locations of the various objects on the desk; it was a problem which quickly brought out the student's "audience sense" (or lack of it). Weak writers (frequently, though not necessarily, the same ones who shaped their essays as a catalogue) tended to describe locations relationally; that is, in terms of what an object is next to, rather than where it is on the desk. We frequently found long strings of relationships expressed in this way, so that by the end of a paper, the pencil was next to the pad which was by the gum which was below the dictionary which was close to the wallet which was in the upper right hand corner. The descriptions may have seemed clear to the writer, but the reader's mind quickly boggles at deciphering these locations. More skillful writers, of course, managed to pinpoint locations exactly, generally by describing the objects in relation to the desk (rather than to each other) or characterizing the display as a whole, i.e. "five objects spread in a semi-circle about a dictionary."

Sample paper #1 leans toward the "relational string" type. The wallet and tablet are shown to be in the upper right and left corners. The dictionary is placed in the center of the desk, but the gum and pencil become totally lost; the gum is simply "next," and the pencil comes "then." (Score 2.)

Paper #2 has the same problem. The writer locates the dictionary and suggests that the billfold is somewhere to the left of it, but the reader loses track of the pencil and paper. Try, for example, to figure out where the paper is, both in relation to the desk and in relation to the dictionary. The final paragraph is a weak attempt to rectify the error. (Score 2.)

Paper #3. Same problem. The pencil, for example, is simply "next to the gum package," which, in turn, is "to the left" of the dictionary. (Score 2.)

Paper #4. The writer shifts between locating the objects in relation to the desk and locating them in terms of each other. Nevertheless, with the use of exact (sometimes painfully precise) measurements he manages to locate the object quite specifically for the reader. (Score 4.)

Paper #5. By identifying the general pattern of the display (a semicircle of objects around the dictionary) and characterizing the positions of the various objects, the writer pretty clearly describes the locations, although he does fail to locate some objects precisely and does tend toward vague relational strings. (Score 3.)

Categories 3 and 4: Characterizing and Classifying Details.

Classifying details may be roughly defined as details (i.e. descriptive phrases or modifiers) which are used to place an object within a specific class. For example, "man" is a class of "object"; "men with black hair" is a smaller class; "men with black hair and brown eyes" is even smaller, because of the limiting effect of classifying details. Generally, descriptions of shape, size, color, genus, and the like, will be classifying details.

Individualizing details, as the name implies, separate the object from others in its class by noting individual characteristics which it, and it alone, has. Thus a man with black hair and brown eyes might be separated from others in that class by the individualizing characteristics of a patch worn over his eye, a slight limp, a peculiarly charming smile, or by the fact that he is standing in the northwest corner of the room looking out the window.

To some extent, this division into two kinds of detail is an arbitrary one; whether a detail is classifying or characterizing frequently depends on the situation. Thus in a room containing 100 human beings, 99 of them female, "man" is clearly an individualizing term. In the same room a set of details like "the lovely 5'6" blonde, wearing a light blue dress, and drinking tea" might all be classifying details, not sufficient to distinguish one woman from four or five others.

Nevertheless, in these papers, the distinction was generally clear. Details which described the general characteristics of an object, i.e. a black leather wallet, a red Thorndike-Barnhart dictionary, a pad of 8 x 11 white paper, were considered classificatory. Individualizing details were included by the student's noting, for example, that the wallet was open with a social security card showing, that the gum was open with three sticks missing, the pad of paper is partly used, and the dictionary is well-worn so that the cover is falling apart.

The two categories (Nos. 3 and 4) thus estimated the completeness with which the writer has classified and individualized the objects on the teacher's desk. Paper #5 illustrates fairly effective use of both kinds of detail. The details from paragraph one of this paper are schematized below:

Classifying	Individualizing
red dictionary	slightly open
beige wallet	open with a place for pictures to a George Harrison Fan Club Card, place for change and dollar bills.
pad of plain white paper, width approx. 3 x 7.	partly used
dark blue pencil with turquoise eraser inscribed with words in white print.	partly sharpened, hardly used.
package of gum	open, two pieces of gum in it.
white chalk	used on both ends, about 3/4" long.

Because of the use of both kinds of detail to describe the objects fully, the paper would probably be graded 5 in both categories.

Paper #1. The writer adequately classifies the objects but does not individualize. Thus we have a black wallet, a red high school dictionary published by Thorndike-Barnhart, a red and white package of Clark's Cinnamint Gum, and a dark blue silvertone pencil. There is no indication of what makes this red high school dictionary different from others, or of the condition of the pencil or chalk. Is the package of gum open or closed? clean or dirty? full or empty? (Classifying: 4; Individualizing: 1.)

Paper #2. Adequate use of classifying details. Characterizing details used sporadically: "rather worn billfold open to Mr. Catanzaro's driver's license, which is pink and white"; gum package "open and with two sticks of gum in it"; an "almost empty" pad; a "dictionary standing upright and open to page 603." (Classifying: 4; Individualizing: 3.)

Paper #3. The pencil is classified in considerable detail: "a silver tone black lead pencil with number 2 lead." The dictionary, gum, paper, and wallet are somewhat less than adequately described, interestingly enough because there is no mention of color. The dictionary is individualized with a description of its stance; the wallet by the description of J. Catanzaro's driver's license, and the gum by mention of the fact that only two pieces remain. (Classifying: 3; Individualizing: 3.)

Paper #4 is an interesting approach to the topic relying heavily on classifying details. The author plays an identification "game" with the audience, presenting the classifying characteristics of the object and then solving the "mystery" by identifying the object. The book, for example, is described solely in terms of its classifying characteristics; it is read, "7 inches tall, 5 inches wider and about 2 1/2 inches thick," with "hard covers and many sheets of paper." But for the most part the author does not individualize as completely; the pencil, for example, is not differentiated from other circular wooden, painted blue objects with sharp black points and metal holders enclosing soft green rubbery material. (Classifying: 5; Individualizing: 2.)

Category 5: Sentence Structure.

The simplest presentation of a detail can be made by incorporating it as part of an independent clause or a simple sentence. For example, describing a wallet one might say:

> It is a wallet. It is black. It is leather. It is open to the card section. The card showing is a driver's license. The license is pink and white. The wallet is worn. The wallet has the owner's initials on it.

The sentences contain only a single level of meaning; the complement modifies or describes the subject.

A more sophisticated way of treating descriptive details is to work them into the sentence in modifying, non-restrictive clauses or phrases, thus creating a multilevel sentence:

> It is a black, slightly worn leather wallet, embossed with the owner's initials and open to the card section with a pink driver's license showing.

The sentence contains three levels of description and modification. At level one we have the independent clause:

> It is a black leather wallet.

There are three second-level modifications:

> slightly worn
>
> embossed with the owner's initials
>
> open to the cards section

and one third-level phrase:

> with a pink driver's license showing.

Current taste and linguistic habits make multilevel sentences stylistically superior to single level independent clauses. This category attempts to measure the extent to which the writer does (or does not) use multilevel sentences. It is a little difficult, however, to describe precisely how scores should be distributed. Clearly a student might use multilevel sentences exclusively and produce a stylistically bad paper, one with such complex, involuted sentence structure that it becomes unreadable. Ideally, a paper will contain a mixture of single and multiple level sentences, but the ratio cannot be prescribed. Perhaps the easiest way to define high and low papers is to examine a few papers; roughly, a paper that includes multilevel sentences regularly would be scored 5, a paper which uses independent clause structures exclusively would be scored 1.[8]

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[8] For a more detailed discussion of the multilevel sentence, see Francis Christensen's "A Generative Rhetoric of the Sentence," College Composition and Communication, XIV (October, 1963), 155-161.

Essay #1. The writer sticks rather closely to the single level, independent clause structure. About the only second level modification in the essay is "running vertacle . . ." (sentence [2]) and "standing up" (sentence [3]). Prepositional phrases like "about 3 inches right of the book" (sentence [5]) are restrictively attached to the word or phrase which they modify and thus do not bring additional levels of meaning into the sentence. (Score 2.)

Essay #2 uses multilevel elements more successfully. These include:

rather worn	Sentence [1]
open to Mr. Catanzaro's driver's licence which is pink and green.	
open and with two sticks of gum in it	[2]
(plain white)	[3]
which is standing upright and open to page 603.	[4]
lieing a bit away and to the right of this	[5]
with the closed end to the desk front and the sharpened pencil end touching this.	[5]

(Score 4.)

Essay #3 is somewhat short for effective analysis. Multilevel elements are contained in sentence [1] ("open to . . ."), and sentence [2] ("open to . . ."). The rest of the modification and detail is contained in single level elements. (Score 2.)

Essay #4 is written almost entirely in single level sentences. Note for example the structure of sentences [12]-[18], which are particularly short and monotonous. There are a few multilevel elements in the essay (in sentences [6], [12], and [13]), none of which are particularly detailed. (Score 1.)

Essay #5. Multilevel elements:

	Sentence
slightly open	[2]
placed in a semi-circle	[3]
open to a George Harrison Fan Club card	[4]
partly used	[6]
partly sharpened with a hardly used turquoise eraser	[8]
with the eraser	[17]

Multilevel elements are used fairly consistently in paragraph 1, but disappear in paragraph 2. (Score 3.)

In conclusion, let us note that this scheme of grading does perform the "fundamental" operation of evaluation, separating the better from the poorer students. The total scores on the five papers, which are summarized below, show that the teacher can accurately distribute letter grades among the students.

		Category					
		1	2	3	4	5	Total Score
Paper	#1	2	2	4	1	2	11
	#2	3	2	4	3	4	16
	#3	1	2	3	3	2	11
	#4	2	4	5	2	1	14
	#5	4	3	5	5	3	20

More important, of course, is that the various scores give both teacher and student an idea of how the student can improve his writing. The student can be told why his paper seems badly organized and in need of clarification, or realize that his sentences do contain many levels of meaning and understand why this is a good stylistic trait.

It may be argued that such an elaborate process of grading is too time consuming for the teacher with many classes and many papers to grade (The argument is a fair one, although after a little bit of practice using these categories, or ones like them, most teachers will be able to grade a paper in fairly short order). But the amount of time required also reinforces the notion presented in the Northwestern lessons that a worthwhile writing assignment is time consuming. It seems apparent that a theme-a-week, hastily written by the students, hastily graded by the teacher, and hastily forgotten by both is of little pedagogical value.

Stephen Judy

A Guide to the Evaluation of Descriptive Essays

Sample Themes

#1

[1] There are five objects on the desk. [2] There is a black wallet on the left side of the desk running vertacle from standing at the front of the desk. [3] There is a high school dictionary in the center of the desk standing up. [4] This book is red published by Thorndike and Barnhark. [5] Next there is a red and white package of Clark's Cinnamin Gum about 3 inches right of the book. [6] Then there is a dark blue pencil made by silvertone on the right side of the pencil. [7] Finally there is a tablet of paper about 2" by 7" in the upper right hand corner of the desk.

#2

[1] On the desk lies a black rather worn billfold open to Mr. Catanzaros drivers licence, which is pink and green. [2] Ther other articles are a red Thorndike Barnhart dictionary, a blue silvertone no. 2 pencil and a package of Clark's Cinnamint gum, open and with two sticks of gum in it. [3] There is a almost empty pad of paper (plain white) too.

[4] The billfold lies open and to the left of the dictionary, which is standing upright and open to page 603. [5] Then there is the gum lieing a bit away and to the right of this with the closed end to the desk front and the sharpened pencil ent touching this. [6] About five inches away from the pencil point is thepad of paper.

[7] So the order of the objects is, wallet, dictionary, gum, pencil, paper. (starting from the left hand side.

#3

[1] On the desk there is a Thorndike Barhhart dictionary open to pages 602 and 603 about 14 inches off the front edge in the middle of the desk. [2] To the right of the dictionary there is a wallet open to the drivers licence registered to J. Catanzaro. [3] To the left there is a package of Clark's Cinnamint gum with two pieces left in it. [4] Next to the gum package a Silver tone black lead pencil with number 2 lead. [5] The last item is a pad of paper shaped rectangularly. [6] This is close to the front left hand corner of the desk.

#4

[1] On the desk in the front of the room are 6 objects. [2] On the right hand corner of the desk lay an oblong piece of leather material. [3] It has a couple of pockets and a snap to close it with. [4] But right know it lay open with a Beattle picture on it. [5] This is a wallet. [6] In the front of the desk, about 7 inches from the right side, at a 45° angle lay a stack of oblong sheets of manilla paper. [7] Directly to the left and behind this stack of paper is a large red object. [8] It is about 7 inches tall, 5 inches wider and about 2½ inches thick. [9] Between the two hard covers are many sheets of paper. [10] About 4 inches in front of this book lays a long piece of wood. [11] It is circular and is painted blue with enamel. [12] At one end is a sharp point, black in color, which is called lead. [13] At the other end is a metal holder enclosing a soft greeen piece of rubbery material. [14] This is an eraser. [15] The whole object is called a pencil. [16] 5 inches to the right of this is a little package containing two oblong sticks. [17] They are bound in aluminum foil and then again in paper. [18] This paper has printing on it. [19] These two objects are enclosed in an envelope of paper. [20] About 10 inches from the right side of the desk and 10 inches from the right side of the desk and 10 inches from the top lay a white piece of writing equipment. [21] This is called chalk. [22] It is about 1½ inches long. [23] It is made of a compressed powdery substance. [24] At one end it is painted and at the other it is round.

#5

[1] There are 6 objects on the desk. [2] Standing upright is a red dictionary slightly open. [3] In front of the dictionary are five objects placed in a semi circle. [4] From left to right they are: an open beighe wallet with a place for pictures open to a George Harrison Fan Club card. [5] There is a place for change and dollar bills. [6] Next is a pad of plain white paper partly used. [7] The width of the paper is apoximately 3 in the length 7 or 8 in. [8] Next is a dk. blue pencil, partly sharpened with a hardly used tuoquise blue eraser. [9] The pencil is inscibed with words in white print. [10] Nest is a open package of gum with two pieces of gum in it. [11] This gum has a red and white wrapper. [12] This is Cinnament gum. [13] Nest and last is a piece of white chalk about 3/4 in long and used on both ends.

[14] The wallet is lying the long way and the front end is turned slightly more to the right than the back end. [15] The paper is placed with the width to me and the right end is turned slightly more. to the right than the back end. [16] The paper is placed with the width to me and the right end is pushed back slightly. [17] The pencil is also placed with the width to me, but the left end (with the eraser) is pushed back about two inches. [18] The gum is placed on a diagonal. [19] The right end is placed farthest away. [20] The chalk is also placed as the gum. [21] Most of the pages of the dictionary are toward the back cover. [22] The dictionary is open to the the right.